1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

301 and knocked out of shape by a blow or if its owner goes through
885 thorny bushes. A *khehla* who has some self-respect will frequently
554 polish and repair this valuable ornament, for it is a sign of mature
482 age. He who has been ordered by the chief to wear it no longer
645 carries burdens on his head; his crown would be spoilt! He will
461 be accompanied by a boy who carries his parcels; he himself will only carry his stick or his assagai. He will at once be known as one of the mature men of the tribe. This is not to say that the mere fact of wearing the *ngiyana* gives the right of taking part in the important affairs of the country; the counsellors alone possess this right; but from amongst the "crowned," will be chosen the man who is sent to another chief to treat of political questions, for instance.

301 When the hair grows (for, though it is curly, it may become long), the crown rises with it and becomes more or less unsteady, which must be most uncomfortable! The best thing would be to cut the ornament off and then replace it. Mr. Mandjia, one of our neighbours at Rikatla, was probably too lazy to undertake this job, so he put a small red handkerchief between his skull and the crown to prevent it from wobbling.

765 At a certain time all the *ngiyana* disappeared from the land of
643 Nondwane. The chief Mapunga was dead! The loss, kept
554 secret for a year, had been made public, and the law requires all the
885 mature men to take off their crowns when the sovereign of the country is dead. They take the wax from the frame, and make a ball of it; this they fix on a little stick, and place this stick in the roof of their hut above the door. The frame is hung up quite close by, and they leave these objects there till the new chief orders his subjects to re-make their crowns. This shows clearly that the crowning custom is in close relation with the national life of the tribe. The "makhehla" also form special battalions in the army.

178 Nowadays, however, this custom is not observed as religiously
854 as in bygone times. Life is harder, one must go and earn pounds sterling in the port of Lourenço Marques, or in the gold mines, and one can no longer indulge in a lazy life! It may therefore happen that a poor man will refuse to wear the crown, and say to

764 we may remain in peace. He did not leave us in anger. Let us mourn him gently, in peace. Let us help each other to mourn
769 him well, even our parents-in-law from amongst whom he has taken his wife." It may be that he forgets to say something which ought to be said ; then some of his hearers remind him quietly of the omission and he adds the words to his prayer.

764 *The wailing* (ku djila nkosi). As soon as he has finished praying, those present commence crying ; the wailing begins. The women get to their feet and shout loudly, throwing themselves on the ground. The wife of the deceased cries more than any one else : "I remain alone in the lonely plain (libalen). Where have you gone? You have left me." The wailing generally starts on a very high note and finishes a little lower, expressing the pain of the heart in a touching, penetrating manner. Here is one of these sentences, which can hardly be called a song. I heard it in 1893 at the burial of a young woman who was found drowned in the lake of Rikatla.

O my mother ! O my mother ! You have left me, where have you gone? ! (1)

The parents-in-law lament over their daughter, the new widow. Everyone then begins to lament over his own relations who have recently died. The brothers weep together without shouting. They say : "You have gone first. We shall soon follow you, because there is attraction in death."

It is during the mourning that pots, handles of assagais, etc. are broken over the grave.

761 Let us stop a little while at this point.

783 We have seen enough already to observe that, for the Thongas, death
765 (lifu) is not only a sad event, a great cause of pain on account of the bereavement, but a dreadful contaminating power which puts all objects and people in the neighbourhood of the deceased, all his relatives, even those dwelling far away, working in Johannesburg for instance, into a state of uncleanness. This uncleanness is very dangerous indeed. It kills, if not properly treated. All are not affected in the same way. There are concentric circles round the deceased : the widows are the

(1) See for the notes of this song Part V. Ch. III. B.

765 inner circle and will undergo a very rigorous purification ; the grave
783 diggers come next ; then the inhabitants of the bereaved village, the
relations residing in other villages, even the relatives of the wives of the
761 deceased. All these being unclean are placed beyond the pale of
834 society : "Muti wu tjumile," "the village is dark," is the technical
expression. This marginal period lasts longer for those who are
829 most affected ; one year and more for the widows, one month for the village, five or six days only for the mourners from outside. But there are many taboos in connexion with this period. Sexual relations are severely prohibited amongst married people, but the *gangisa* is not so strongly objected to, at any rate in some districts. We shall also meet with the aggregation rites by which re-entry into the ordinary mode of life is secured. The funeral rites may last for one year and are very complex. There are three great moments in the sequence of these rites : 1) *The Great Mourning* which lasts a few days, just after the burial, generally only five days. Here the purification is essentially medical and aims at cleansing the persons and the objects which were directly in contact with the deceased. 2) *The sexual rites* which tend to purify the collective life of the village by the removal of its defilement. 3) *The family rites*, consisting in gatherings of all the relatives, and accompanied by religious ceremonies. These seem to aim at restoring the life of the family, viz. of the social group, which has been diminished by the death of one of its members.

768 This general sequence is found in all the clans. But the rites themselves differ greatly ; I shall try to depict these differences clearly. My information is more complete as regards the Ronga clans, but I owe to Viguet some entirely new and very interesting material regarding the Hlabi rites.

IV. *The Great Mourning of the first five days.*

1) The Great Mourning amongst the Ba-Ronga.

764 Just after the burial, all the inhabitants of the village go to
783 the lake or the river to bathe. The grave-diggers nibble a
[824] *ndjao*, the root of a juncus which has magical power. Special rites will then be performed for the widows. We shall describe

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764 783 them in the next chapter. When they come back from the pool, one of the men climbs on the hut and removes from its top the crown of woven grass, which was its glory during the life of its master. The hut participates in the general state of uncleanness of all his belongings. This crown will be put before the door to close it, and no one will dare to enter any more till the day of the crushing of the hut.

In the Mpfumo clans, that first evening, the grave diggers have some preliminary purification rites to go through: 1) a *hondla*, viz. an ablution with leaves of the nkuhlu tree which have been crushed in a mortar with some water; 2) in former times they used to make a pipe with the shell of a raw sala, place in it an ember and a little hen's dung, and *smoke* this disgusting mixture.

765 783 From that first day, the grave diggers and the widows, when eating, must use special spoons *(psihanti)* made from old broken calabashes. It is taboo for them to take food with their fingers from the common plate during the five days of the Great Mourning.

The night comes. All the widows sleep in the open, their huts, which belonged to the deceased, being taboo. If it rains, they sleep in the other huts of the village.

765 755 783 On the following day, the *doctor* comes and proceeds to the medical purification of the widows and of the grave-diggers. This will consist in three successive *vapour baths*, on the first, third and fifth day after death. These *mahungulo* are administered in the same way as the one I have already described in connection with the infantile rites (p. 55). But the drugs boiled in the pot and the pills burnt in the fire are considered very powerful, especially those of the first day, so much so that the pot in which they have been prepared must be broken on the grave. The two grave-diggers and the first widow must be exposed together to this particularly powerful disinfectant, the widow keeping on her old clothing during the operation. The second and third bath, those provided for the other widows, are not so strong, and the pot can be kept. In the case of these the widow does not enter together with the grave-diggers. These rites, as

765 well as the obligation of using special spoons, refer only to the
783 diggers and the widows.

Other rites must be performed by the whole community.

302 First the *cutting of the hair*, which must be complete for the widows and the near relations. Men sometimes cut only one strand on each side, women cut from the forehead to the nape of the neck. The operation is performed either by the doctor or by anybody who is familiar with it, and the instrument used is either an iron razor or a bit of glass. They say this shaving is an act of respect for the dead, also a sign of sadness and a means of preventing the *mayiha*, the impression of the hair standing on end from fear of death. Should mourners forget to cut their hair, they might lose their senses, and become delirious (hahama).

765 Then they put on *malopo*, viz, pieces of dark blue cotton
783 cloth which have been used for a long time amongst the Ba-Ronga.
604 The first widow must have them before she enters the enclosure of the second vapour bath.

A third general rite is the *luma milomo*, the purification of the food of the deceased. This is not a medicinal operation, but it seems that, by this act, every relative removes from himself the danger which is in the contaminated food. The word *luma*, which we shall often find in the Thonga ritual, means originally to bite (like a dog) or to cause violent, internal pain (colic or pains of labour). But in the ritual terminology it means to accomplish certain rites in relation to some given food in order to remove the danger which is attached to it. The *milomo* are seeds of each kind of cereal which the deceased had in his storehouses. Some beans, grains of maize, kaffir corn, kaffir peas, etc., are cooked and poured into one of the baskets (lihlelo) of the deceased. The *ntukulu*, viz. the uterine nephew, the son of the sister of the deceased, is first called. It is he who must begin the rite and this is so important that, when people go to pay their mourning visit, they always take with them a girl or a boy who is a " ntukulu " of the one they mourn. The child stands before the pot, his feet together. The master of the mourning, (in this case, the first widow) kneels before him, takes a few drops from the pot, and some of the cooked food which remains at the bottom, and pours

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765 this between his great toes. He bends his body and rubs the
783 two great toes against one another. Then he turns his back to
604 the place and goes away. He must not look behind : it is taboo. Then the other relatives say : " Let us all go and *luma milomo.* " He has given them the right to do so.

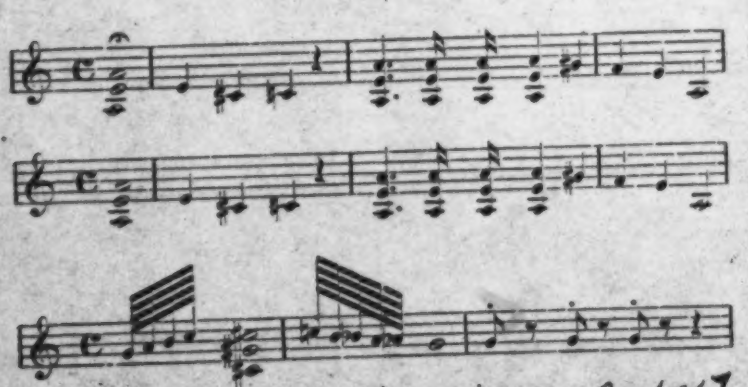
765 A little of the *milomo* is carefully kept in a pot for months.
783 When relatives who were absent on the day of the death come back from Johannesburg or from elsewhere, they must perform this ceremony before entering the village and eating any food in it. " Ba yila muti " — " they are taboo to the village." The rule applies only to relatives. Other people may very well eat from the deceased's store of food without any harm, as its contamination is dangerous only to his family. Another variety of this rite consists in preparing light beer with the mealies of the dead and taking first one mouthful which must be spat out on the right side, then a second one on the left side, after which one is allowed to drink.

765 The *gardens* of the deceased must also be purified, and this is
783 done by the rite called *baninga mabele*, to give light to the mealies.
415 The widows and all the female relatives go to his fields holding an old and empty *shikutja*. The shikutja is the hard shell of a sala fruit, the size of an orange, in which has been kept the provision of vegetable *tihuhlu* fat (see Part IV) and which is still impregnated with it. The women set fire to it and walk through the gardens holding it up and illuminating the fields. This is perhaps in relation to the idea that death means darkness, and that its contamination is " black " (ntima) so long as the cleansing has not taken place.

765 During the five days of the Great Mourning, relatives and
574 friends come to pay the *official mourning visit* (1). They enter the village, the women shouting their lamentations (mikulungwana). Some one leads them to the grave and they walk round it uttering cries of mourning, taking leave of the deceased. At the burial of Sokis, I heard a woman saying with a trembling voice : " Goodbye! You have gone! Do not forget us. Remember Mulalen."

(1) This visit can be paid one, two, or three months later on, because, as they say, " nkosi a pei boli, " — " the mourning does not get rotten." But it is only during the five days that dances take place.

765 Mulalen was Sokis' little daughter. They bring with them
574 presents, five hundred reis, a hen, a goat, some light beer, perhaps
177 a mat for the widow because hers has been thrown away or a piece
273 of mourning cloth. The inhabitants receive them politely, and spread mats on the ground for them. They tell each other the news (djungulisana). Then after having *luma*, they eat and drink. The Ba-Ronga have their drink already prepared: it is the red wine
765 which Banyan merchants sell to them all over the country. The
533 visitors get drunk. They dance, and the mourning ceremony turns into an orgy with dances and songs of all kinds. The singing during this Great Mourning consists either of war songs executed by the men, which are very impressive, or of ordinary dancing songs, the licentious ones being particularly appropriate and being performed by women. (Annotatio 9)[1]. In fact they are the proper mourning songs, those which are specially chosen when it is wished duly to lament a great man. I have witnessed these performances at a mourning ceremony of the " breaking of the hut " and shall refer to this subject again. In Vol. II. Part V Ch. II. B. I shall quote some of the mourning songs which have a peculiar stoic character. Here are two others from a collection made by Mrs Audéoud, the wife of one of our missionaries. They were sung at the death of the chief Tshutsha, near Makulane in the Maputju country. One of these was a war song accompanied with drums. It sounded as follows :



1 [see p. 517 in these categories or in 116--Analysis]

765 533 The other is a curious apostrophe to the wizards who were believed to have bewitched the deceased, and means : " Good bye, wizard! Good bye, wizard! You will kill people. You come to kill people, you come during the night. "

765 783 But the *closing day* arrives at last, the *day of the sprinkling* (shuba). When the grave-diggers have well perspired in their vapour bath, the doctor takes the pot in which the medicine is still boiling. All the women sit down with their children on their backs, the men stand in a line, holding their assagais and sticks in their hands. The doctor sprinkles his decoction over them all with a branch covered with leaves. The children cry because the burning drops hurt them. The women try to hide behind each other. The men gesticulate as if striking enemies with their assagais ; this is to show that their arms are strong and that they can now go to the war, as it would have been taboo for them to join the army before this purification had taken place. Should a man be absent from home, his sticks are also brought to the sprinkling to be purified (1). Then the doctor goes with his pot, sprinkling all the village, the huts, the doors, the backs of the roofs, the fence, the belongings of the deceased which are kept to be distributed amongst the heirs. After this operation, the village is pure as far as material things are concerned. The contamination which had fallen on all of them by reason of their owner's death is removed. Before the sprinkling it would have been dangerous to remove anything. Now if any one should have left anything in the kraal before the death, he can come and recover it. This is the act by which " the mourning is scattered " (hangalasa nkosi).

765 292 Visitors go home, having put on their *malopa*, if they are Ba-Ronga ; strings of milala palm leaves round their heads, their necks, arms, and legs, if they belong to Northern clans. The custom of wearing a white handkerchief round the head is spreading. If a goat is killed, every one wears a bracelet made of its skin round the wrist, and the widow and the principal grave-digger

(1) In the Northern clans, says Viguet, a little of this mixture is kept to sprinkle, visitors during the following days, because " they are taboo for the things of the village, not having been cleansed ; " (ba yila psa le mutin, hikuba a ba basiswanga.)

765 put strings, made from the same skin, over their breasts. The
292 widow adds new strings when other goats are killed during the mourning visits which will take place later on, and until the adjudication of the inheritance. It is a sign that her husband is dead (a feliwile).

2) The Great Mourning in the Northern clans.

765 The foregoing is the sequence of the rites of the Great Mourning
783 in the Ronga clans. In the Northern clans, according to Viguet, the same elements are found, but in another form.

825 As soon as the mourning lamentations begin, the grave-diggers
278 send some men to fetch the *tinyele*, which are bits of skin taken from the soles of elephants' feet. These are burnt on charcoal, together with cocks' dung, and the mourners come and inhale the smoke with reeds, when they are tired of wailing. The *tinyele* are considered to be a powerful medicine. It is taboo to eat or even to snuff before having inhaled this smoke.

765 That first night, everyone sleeps in the open, and the
783 grave-diggers are not allowed to use their mats. They must cut grass to cover them for fear that their impurity might contaminate the mats. As usual, sexual relations are suspended between married people, but the *bugango* is not taboo in the Northern clans, as girls (psigango) are not wives (basati). When, on the following days, visitors come to the mourning, they go straight to the grave with a small basket of mealies and spread them over it saying. "Go! Die! You have left us." This spreading of mealies is a *mhamba*, an offering. Then the doctor comes. It seems that his operations last only three days. There are no vapour baths properly speaking, but the doctor burns his powders together with bits of bark in broken pots, and all the mourners come and inhale the smoke through reeds, as they did on the first day.

The *purification of the food* is performed by a rite which corresponds with the *lumisa milomo* of the Rongas. The doctor

765/783

cooks the mealie pap together with a certain drug. He prepares "bupsa bya muri," the medicinal porridge. The grave-diggers make a ball of this food, while it is still hot, and act as if they were throwing some of it into their mouths, but in reality they throw it over their shoulders. Then they put some more porridge into their mouths and eat it. The master of the mourning then takes the food and goes all over the village to perform this ceremony for all present. This is done also for the visitors arriving during the following days. Under no other condition would they be allowed to eat food in the village!

As regards the purification of the food for relatives who may come for a visit later on, after the Great Mourning, it is obtained by the rite called *mafularela*. "Fularela" means to turn one's back to another person. The day the absent one comes back to the mortuary village, the master of the mourning, the woman who has begun the *hlamba ndjaka* (see later on), takes one of the big wooden spoons which are used to distribute the porridge ; she pours water into it and puts salt into the water. Then she puts into it a glowing cinder. The water partly evaporates. She then kneels down in front of the new comer, turning her back to him, passes the spoon round her waist from left to right and afterwards gives it to him to drink; this ceremony removes the *yila* of the food. Should it not be performed the food would cause disease or even death to the returning relative.

The master of the mourning, or of the death (ñwinyi wa rifu), the wife of the deceased or the grave-digger who held the head in the burial, accomplishes a second act of purification or of strengthening for all the mourners ; it is called the *nganganya*. The doctor takes a bulb of a big Lilliacea called *gonwa* (Crinum Forbesii), crushes it, adds to it some medecine and warms it on a stone which has been heated in the fire. The operation then begins with the infants. The grave-digger covers his fingers with this substance and, standing behind the child, puts the fingers of both hands into its umbilicus and brings them round its waist, pressing them firmly against the skin until they meet again on the spine. Should a child not yet have had the string tied round his loins (boha puri, see page 56), the strap of its ntehe alone will be

765 anointed with the medicine. As regards adults, the operation of
783 *maganyo* is performed as follows ; the master of the mourning
516 passes his hand down from the knee to the toes. This rite[1] is evidently in connexion with the act of walking, which is thus purified, and with standing upright (yima), which means health and strength.

765 *Cutting the hair* is also a medicinal act amongst the Hlabis.
783 The physician takes a broken pot, pours into it water and a
302 purifying powder, washes the head of the deceased's wife with this preparation and cuts her hair with a razor. Everyone takes a little of the mixture and washes his own head, and they then shave each other. The hair is thrown away into the bush, not on the grave.

765 The Great Mourning is concluded by the *phunga*, the sprinkling,
783 corresponding to the Ronga *shuba*, which is performed exactly in the same way while the water is still boiling. The doctor sprinkles
177 a whole potful on the people ; then he pours fresh water into the
231 pot and sprinkles the doors, the back part of the kraals of the oxen and of the goats. —"How about the pigs ?" I asked Viguet. He laughed heartily! —"The pigs? They are nothing ! They have come from the White people They are so new to the country that lately the Pedis killed them outside the villages and the men only ate their flesh!" The pig has no part in the Bantu ritual!

V. *Sexual rites of purification.*

765 This is a most curious and mysterious subject and, to understand
783 it thoroughly, it is necessary to penetrate deeply into the Bantu mind and to forget our own conceptions of conjugal life. I hope
834 none of my readers will be shocked by ceremonies which are evidently performed with the greatest earnestness and are a real aspiration toward purity, purity as it is conceived by a tribe still plunged in the dim notions of collective morality.

1 [among the Northern clans --Analyst]

765 These rites are somewhat different in the Hlabi and Ronga clans.
783 They are called in the Northern clans *hlamba ndjaka*, in the
834 Southern *lahla khombo*. I will begin with the description of the first, as being the most characteristic. Viguet, who has seen them practised, and who took part in them himself, gave me a graphic description of them.

Ndjaka means two things. Firstly, the objects left by the deceased, which will pass to his heirs in the course of time. The heirs are called *badyi ba ndjaka*, the eaters of the ndjaka. But *ndjaka* also signifies the frightful malediction accompanying death: "it is something which kills a great many men." Therefore the *ndjaka* must be washed away; *hlamba* means precisely to wash away.

This malediction or dangerous impurity contaminates objects, which must be cleansed by the sprinkling (phunga) as we have seen; but it affects still more deeply the village as a whole, the *muti*, the organism which is at the base of all Thonga society, and which has a life of its own, a collective life. That life must be purified. During the whole mourning, and even during the last days of the deceased, when death was threatening, all sexual relations have been forbidden. Why? Because the village was in a state of contamination... "Muti wu tjumile." It cannot return to the ordinary course of life without a special collective purification.

765 Let us see how this is managed on a particularly serious occasion,
783 when the headman or other great personage dies. Some weeks
835 after the burial, all the married people of the village assemble, the men apart, the women apart. They discuss in what order the different couples must proceed to the purifying act. They question each other to know if each one has duly observed the law of continence. Should one of them confess that he has sinned (dyoha), he will have to take the lead. Should he have sinned and not confess it, he will be very guilty. But he himself will suffer for his bad action; he has stolen the inheritance (a yibe ndjaka), and it will not be wonderful if he begins to cough, grows thin and dies of consumption! If there has been no transgression of the law, then the master of the mourning will have to begin. He goes out of the village with his wife

765 to the bush. There they have sexual relations in the ritual
783 fashion, viz. s. n. i. (See Annotatio 2)[1] They come back by
833 separate ways. The woman has taken with her a pot full of water ; she goes straight with it to a certain spot, which has been decided upon during the discussion, either in front of the main entrance of the village or at the door of the hut. There she washes her hands which contain "their impurity" (thyaka ra bona). All the other couples do the same, each woman coming in her turn to cleanse her impurity at the same place. When this is over, the men also come to this spot and stamp on the ground. Sticks belonging to absent young men, or a piece of clothing of a girl who happens to be away from home, are also brought to this spot and are purified. The same is done to the straps of the ntehe of the infant, as we have seen, but he is not allowed to be present, as it might cause his death. When the purifying act is finished in all its phases, men and women go to the river and bathe; the men higher up, the women lower down. (Annotatio 6)[2]

Such is the *hlamba ndjaka* amongst the Thongas of the North, when the life of the village has been deeply affected by the death of an important member of the community. The rite is performed with less publicity when a child dies. Then the act takes place, not outside, in the bush, but inside the hut, as it is a private mourning. Should the husband have had regular intercourse with his wife before this purification has been carried out, it is a very great sin. His wife will go and confess their fault to one of the women of the village. This woman will tell it to her husband's mother, who will have to find the remedy. The guilty husband must not eat at all... If he eats, he will have eaten the contamination of death (u mitile rifu). The *hlamba ndjaka* of the whole village will have to take place. (Annotatio 7)[1]

765 The hlamba ndjaka concerns first of all the inhabitants of the
783 mortuary village, but it sometimes extends to the parents of the
595 women of that village, who dwell, of course, in other places. If the first wife of a man dies, his second wife, the one with whom the widower has begun the purifying operation at home, will have to go to her own parents *to give them water* (ku ha mati), as they say, viz, to cleanse them. She takes with her in a pot a portion of the

1 [See p. 516 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]
2 [See p. 577 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

765 water used for the purification, arriving early in the morning in the
783 neighbourhood of the paternal kraal, and calls her mother. Then
595 she washes her hands on the spot and all her relatives will come and stamp on the ground. This is considered a great duty which a married daughter ought never to forget, otherwise she is said to have turned her back on her parents (a ba fularelile). They will be angry with her and not visit her for at least a year (Annotatio 8).[1] The woman who has done this is called "the one who has cleansed the inheritance" (muhlantsi wa ndjaka). She has taken upon her the contamination, but she will not suffer from it, because she belongs to another family, and the contamination of death is dangerous more especially to the people who are of the same blood as the deceased. This woman will assuredly be praised and even rewarded with two hoes. When she goes to her relatives "to give them water," she will make a present of these two hoes to her father, who will say: "All right! You have cleansed those people." Then she will have the right of adorning herself with the bracelets of her deceased co-wife! Old women no longer having sexual intercourse are allowed to appropriate the old clothing of a deceased woman.

765 The Ba-Ronga do not know the expression hlamba ndjaka.
783 They have a corresponding rite, performed in the same manner,
833 which they call *lahla khombo*. *Khombo* means misfortune, *lahla*, to throw away. It is the medicine of death (muri wa lifu), said Magingi, an old heathen of Rikatla. It is also said "to heal the mourning" (daha nkosi). This rite more especially concerns the grave-diggers. The one who carried the legs of the deceased begins. The sexual relations take place very early in the morning. When his wife comes back, she washes her hands at the door of her hut, and all the inhabitants of the village come and stamp on the wet place; then they enter the hut. The doctor comes and prepares a steam bath for the man. Then the second grave-digger performs his *lahla khombo*, and the same gathering of all the members of the community takes place before his hut. Afterwards the village is pure. But if the grave-diggers are cleansed, the widows are not yet purified, and we shall see that, for them, the *lahla hkombo* will last much longer.

1 [See p. 677 In these categories or in 116--Analyst]

765 A man who transgresses the law of continence before the lahla
783 khombo is said in Ronga to have "crossed the village" (a
834 tjemakanya muti). He has taken the mourning (nkosi), the misfortune (khombo) upon himself. He will have sores all over his body and will begin to cough (consumption).

Amongst the Rongas, it seems also that the *bugango* is prohibited in mortuary villages during the marginal period. The men even
[115] prevent boys going to the villages to see their girls, says Mbekwa, an old inhabitant of Nondwane.

VI. *Family rites.*

765 After two or three months, a first gathering of the whole family of the deceased takes place. Amongst the Ba-Ronga its function is to close or break down the mortuary hut. Amongst the Northern clans, no relation is established between this family gathering and the fate of the hut. But everywhere its principal aim seems to be to restore the family whose head has been removed by death, and which must be reorganised.

1) Amongst the Ba-Ronga.

For the Ba-Ronga the habitation of the deceased is tabooed. It is a *shira* (grave), as well as the place in which he has been buried and, for this reason, it must be destroyed. But this destruction is not accomplished at once. Some time must elapse (1), two, three, nine months, before the family gathering takes place. I witnessed it near Rikatla on December 15th 1907 and can therefore describe this rite in detail.

Manyibane had died five or six months previously. He was

(1) At any rate, such is the old law. But nowadays the Rongas sometimes crush the hut at once during the five days to save trouble. This was done in the case of Soka.

765 the headman of a large village in the Shifimbatlelo district (18 miles North of Lourenço Marques). His son Mugwanu had been chosen to take his place, but Manyibane had a younger brother, called Fenis, who had taken care of the village in the meantime. All the relatives were assembled. Groups were formed under all the trees. At 4. 30 p. m. the men began to gather near the old black-roofed hut ; one of them, an elderly man, took between [824] his teeth a piece of a root of a special juncus, called *sungi*, bit off a little of it and, after having chewed this substance, rubbed both his legs with it (evidently to find courage and strength for the work he was undertaking) and penetrated into the old hut. He came back bringing with him a dozen beautiful white eggs!.. The hen did not know that the habitation of the deceased was a tabooed grave, and had laid her eggs in this convenient refuge! Then all the men approached and began to pull out the poles of the wall, digging on both sides of each pole ; some of them lifted the roof so as to make room enough for the poles to be pulled out. This work was accomplished with great care ; the earth was carefully placed in a pot and slowly poured out some distance away ; the poles were gently laid down in front of the entrance, on the top of the door, which had been previously placed there, thus forming a regular heap. These precautions are taken out of respect for the deceased. . It would be an insult to him to do otherwise, and a relation guilty of such an offence "would at once be seized by colic, the disease of the wolves (masule)." Some boys, clad in European dress, threw the poles violently on the ground. Spoon laughed : "They know the *shilungo*, the ways of the White men," he said. "They have lost their respect!"

765 342 When all the poles were removed and there remained only the reeds of the wall, the men jumped on the roof. The roof is a big conical basket made of sticks tied together and covered with grass. It at once sank down under their weight. But they wished to flatten the cone, to crush it down to the level of the 765 soil. Therefore some of the men pulled the sticks out of the roof to lessen the resistance ; some kicked it in order to break the sticks. They could not succeed ; the cone was still there more or

765 less out of shape. In the end they brought axes and chopped all round, about half way up the cone, and with loud shouts brought the destroyed hut level with the ground. Everything belonging to it will be left there to rot. No one dares to remove or to burn this ruin. It is a taboo (1).

The men were satisfied. They had succeeded : "The mourning had not overcome them," (nkosi a wu ba hlulanga), as would have been the case had one of them met with an accident during the operation. Some pots full of water were brought and they washed their hands and their faces conscientiously. They retired a while and all the members of the family, the women included, came and settled themselves as shown on the accompanying illustration of the scene. In front of the crushed hut *(1)*, in the space between it and the small hut of the first widow *(3)*, the old men sat down *(4)*, near them the *batukulu*, viz. the uterine nephews of the deceased *(5)*, their wives, and a few old women *(6)*. The other men *(10)* and women of mature age *(9)* took their places between the neighbouring huts, leaving a wide place for the dance.

765 The brother of the deceased, Fenis, brought on his shoulders a
782 young goat. Two hens and a cock were provided, in all two male and two female offerings. Some branches covered with leaves were spread before the heaps of poles *(2)*, and the *batukulu* began to kill the victims. One of them took the cock by the legs, his brother held the head and cut the neck half through. At each cut of the knife, all the women uttered their *mikulungwana* (piercing cries). He threw the fowl down, still alive and panting. They did the same with the three fowls, everybody laughing and amused at seeing them jump before they died. Then one of the *batukulu* seized the goat by one of the forelegs, lifted it up as high as he could, and planted an assagai under its shoulders, trying to reach the heart. The face of the goat was turned towards the North (2). At once more mikulugwane! The animal was crying

(1) In a neighbouring district, one of our evangelists built a chapel near the ruin of the chief Gwabe. For months it was impossible to remove that ugly decaying roof; those on the spot were opposed to it and the chieftainess of the Mabota district gave permission only because the evangelist was connected with White people.

(2) I suppose the Manyibane family came from the North, and they wanted the goat to cry in this direction to call the spirits of the ancestors to the sacrifice.

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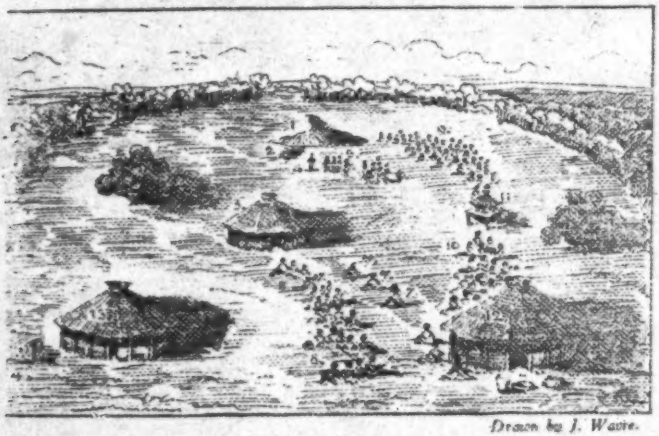
pitifully ; its agony lasted five minutes at least and the whole time the women were shouting with pleasure, because it is necessary that a victim should cry! In the groups, men and women were discussing where and how the sacrificer ought to introduce the blade in order to kill the goat more quickly. His wife came and



Drawn by J. Waite.

The ceremony of crushing down the hut.

► 1. Deceased's hut, crushed down. 2. Heap of poles. 3. Provisional hut of the widow. 4. Sacrificer. 5. Uterine nephews. 6. Wives of the uterine nephews. 7. Dancers. 8. Women clapping their hands. 9. Other women. 10. Men. 11. Henhouse. 12. Hut of the younger brother. 13. Hut of the tall woman who danced. 14. A "shigiyane", wood pile built by her daughter-in-law's relatives.

helped him, and not until after ten minutes, at least, did they succeed.

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Then, while the batukulu and the old men were busy with the victims, cutting them up and squeezing the psanyi (half digested grass) out of the bowels, the other mourners began to sing and to dance. First an elderly woman, of a very clear complexion and a mephistophelean face, very tall, with a curiously licentious smile, came into the middle of the place, opened her arms wide and *suma*, began to sing. Together with her song she performed a strange mimicry with her thighs. This mimicry took on a more and more lascivious character ; it became a regular

765 535 831 womb dance, so immoral (Annotatio 9)[1] that the men dropped their eyes, as if they feared that she would take off all her clothing. But the other women seemed thoroughly to enjoy this horrible performance, and encouraged her by clapping their hands and beating their drums. The words of her songs were also of a very questionable character. She described an adulterous woman going during the night from one hut to another, seeking for lovers, knocking on the walls (to attract the notice of the men ?).

> The walls of the huts have deceived her fellow-women when she goes knocking on them...

Another old woman, of at least seventy years of age, followed her, and running with a mincing gait through the place, uttered words of the same kind.

This seems very immoral indeed. Let us remember however that, in the opinion of the Thongas, these songs, which are taboo in ordinary life, are specially appropriate to the mourning period "These women have been uncovered by the death of their husband," said Mboza. "There is no longer any restraint on them. They are full of bitterness when they perform these lascivious dances." The reason is perhaps deeper, as it is not only the widows who sing these words ; we are still in a marginal period, the period of mourning, and these phases of life are marked for the Bantus by this strange contrast : prohibition of sexual intercourse and a shameless outpouring of impure words and gesticulations (Annotatio 10).[2]

765 782 But in the meantime the *batukulu* had finished their work. They had already distributed the various parts of the victim according to rule, to the visitors, who would eat them on their way home, not in the village ; it is taboo. They had put aside one shoulder, the lungs and one of the hoofs for the sacrifice. Relatives had made a provision of *psanyi*. An old man then took a pill made of the *psanyi*, that found in the smallest stomach, called shihlakahla. He pressed it against his lips, took into his mouth a little of the liquid squeezed from it and spit it out again with the sacramental *tsu*. He then proceeded to pray : "You, Manyiban, you have left us. People used to say you were a

1 [See p. 517 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

2 [See pp 517-518 in these categories or in 116--Analyst]

765 782 wizard (a clever man who could overcome death). In what has your witchcraft resulted ? Are you not dead! You have left us in peace. Go to Tlotlomane ; let Tlotlomane go to X ; let X go to Y, etc. (He utters the names of the ancestors.) Call each other to come here and look. Are we not gathered together ? Here is so and so. The batukulu also are here. Accept this offering and may we live peacefully together ; visit each other (Annotatio 11)[1]. Even if they do not come to pay me visits, let them come to Fenis ; he is their father now. And you, Mugwanu, you remain at the head of the village. You are their headman now. Do not scatter your people. Cultivate good relations with each other."

765 543 578 But a woman suddenly stands up and interrupts him : "Bring everything to the light," she says! The old priest stops. She goes on : "They say I am a Muchopi" (a woman of dissolute manners). The mikulungwane are heard on all sides. It is a family drama which we are attending! This woman is the daughter of the deceased ; Manyibane has sold her to pay off his debts ; he has not kept the lobola money to buy a wife for one of her brothers ; that is the reason why they hate her. They do not receive her in the village. She pours out her grievances before them in this family gathering, when they are praying to their ancestors. It is the favourable time! She goes on : "Is it my fault ? Did I not obey our father ? I have not fled away. Now what am I to do ? He alone received me here! You despise me. Say everything! Do not hide it!"

Her interruption has lasted five minutes at least and she goes back to her place very angry. Sometimes relatives who have serious complaints to make against their kinsfolk choose this precise moment to vent their anger and leave the gathering with violent words. In such a case, it is said : "The mourning has overcome this family."

765 782 The old priest is a little disconcerted. He speaks at random, always calling his Tlotlomane. The whole scene is perfectly natural, but the participants do not show the slightest religious awe. Suddenly one of the batukulu rises, takes a bottle of wine which has been also brought there as an offering, pours a

[1] [See p. 518 in these categories or in the Analyse]

765 little of it into a glass and raises it to the lips of the old man. "He
782 cuts his prayer" and while all the attention of the public is
604 concentrated upon this act (which belongs also to the ritual, as the priest must be the first to partake of the offering), the wives of the batukulu rush towards the shoulders, lungs and hoofs of the goats and the bottle of wine, seize them and run away towards the west. They have stolen the meat of the sacrifice! At once all stand up and follow them laughing, shouting and pelting them with the *psanyi*, which they had kept for this purpose. The thieves hide themselves behind some bush and eat the meat. Uterine nephews are representatives of the gods, as we shall see later on, and they assert their right by stealing the offering and eating it up.

This ceremony is highly characteristic as it embodies some of the principal ideas of the Thongas in the domain of religion, social life and taboo. It was worth while describing it, and we shall refer to it later on, when dealing with sacrifices and the position of the uterine nephews in the family.

765 The crushing down of the hut is not performed in exactly
292 the same manner amongst the Ba-Ronga. In the clans *South of*
554 *the Bay*, they only *close* it (pfala yindlu). They dig holes in
825 front of the door, into which they insert poles of the bush called *nhleha*, tying thorny branches horizontally to them. The shield of the deceased is placed against the door. The religious rite then takes place and from the skins of the sacrificed goats strips are cut, which the widows will have to wear *en bandoulière* during the following months of their widowhood. The astragalus bones are kept and hung round the neck. The gall-bladder is also preserved and fixed in the hair of the new master of the village as a sign of his new position.

765 In the *district of Makaneta*, on the estuary of the Nkomati,
596 the ceremony comprises two successive acts. First there is also a *provisory closing* of the hut, which can take place one month after the death and is accompanied by the family gathering and the religious ceremony. One year later, when the inheritance is adjudicated, the hut is crushed down, but only if it belonged to a headman of the village and if the kraal is obliged to move in

[765] consequence of the death. If it be the hut of one of the subor-
596 dinates, the roof is simply lifted off and thrown away into the
787 bush.

766 Another very significant rite in connexion with the closing of the hut is accomplished on the death of the master of the village. A branch is cut from the tree of the village, the tree which was revealed by the divinatory bones as the one near which the headman had to build (See Part II Ch. II) ; half of the branch is placed across the great gate of the village, which is then closed and another gate opened, at some distance, in the fence ; the other half is put over the door of the crushed hut.

765 There seem to be great variations in the performance of these
428 ceremonies everywhere. I believe, without being able to vouch for it, that when two family gatherings take place during this last period of the mourning, the first is held to proclaim the new master of the village and the second to distribute the inheritance amongst the heirs-at-law. At any rate these two important acts take place at the gatherings. As the inheritance consists mainly of live stock — human stock, the wives of the deceased, I shall describe the adjudication when treating of the fate of widows.

2) Family rites in the Northern clans.

765 A month after the burial, there is a first gathering of the grave-
574 diggers. They are invited by the widows to a beer-feast. This beer is called : "the beer of the hyenas," as the hyenas also dig graves! No equivocal compliment is intended, the widows merely meaning to thank these men for their services.

765 In the northern clans, *yindlu a yi yili*, the hut is not taboo.
782 It can be slept in again after the five days of the Great Mourning. The plaster of the doorposts is repaired, and a new crown is put on the top when the hut again finds an owner (1). The feast of the

766 (1) The hut of a leper alone is considered irremediably tabooed as the sufferer is buried in it. They dig a hole into which he is pushed by means of sticks. The roof is crushed down over him.

765 782 closing of the hut is therefore replaced by what is called the *beer of the mourning* (byala bya nkosi). All the relatives, brothers, brothers-in-law, nephews, etc., bring a goat, or half a sovereign, or a sovereign, to the master of the mourning, the heir of the village. That individual must give them back as much as he receives from them, a goat for a goat, (timbuti ti labana), a sovereign for a sovereign, and all the animals are killed according to rule. There were fourteen of them at a certain gathering held in the Nkuna capital to mourn one of the wives of the chief Shiluvane in 1905. A sacrifice is offered ; the men sit on one side, the women on the other ; the *kokwane*, viz. the maternal uncle of the deceased, takes the *psanyi* and squeezes it on them all while praying, or rather insulting the gods who have afflicted them with such a bereavement. All rub their chests with this green liquid and add their insults to those of the priest.

[775] According to Viguet, this is the first occasion on which the deceased is treated as a god and prayed to : "Look! You have left the village without a head to lead it! Keep them! Bless them and increase them." The *batukulu* then come to take that portion of the victim which has been put aside for the gods. It does not appear that they steal it, as is the case amongst the Ba-Ronga.

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765 Such is the story of the mourning. Here are some technical expressions in connexion with it : Hamba nkosi, to conduct the mourning. Djila nkosi, to utter mourning lamentations. Daha nkosi, to treat it by purification ceremonies. Kota nkosi, to cope with it. Nkosi wu wupfa, it ripens. Nkosi wu hela, it comes to an end. A wu boli, it does not get rotten, viz. it is always possible to pay a mourning visit.

The name of the deceased when quoted is often preceded by the word "Matjuwa," exactly as with *feu* in French and *late* in English. In the Northern clans the expression employed is "Sira" which means grave : Grave so and so.

775 through an evolution towards deity, as his corpse was decaying in the
765 grave, and the closing of his hut, with the placing of his shield before the door, might well mean his definite incorporation into the world of the dead, and also a means of preventing him from returning to this world and bringing misfortune to his relatives.

765 As regards the relatives, they separate from the former phase by the
783 cutting of the hair, putting out the old fire, leaving off their clothing and wearing mourning attire. A very distinct period of margin then begins, marked by the sexual taboos accompanying it, and they are aggregated again to the ordinary world and to the new phase of their life by all the ceremonies which I have explained at length. Here, however, as the seclusion was caused by a certain most dreaded defilement, the aggregation rites all bear the character of removal of uncleanness: uncleanness of the food, of the gardens, of the bereaved, chiefly grave-diggers and widows, of the whole community, which is cleansed by the sexual rite of hlamba ndjaka, etc.

797 If classification were equivalent to understanding, we might say that
761 we have fairly well understood the complicated Thonga rites which accompany death... But who can boast of having fully understood so profound and mysterious a subject? Death is the great shadow which hovers over life and chills the human heart. Outside of an enlightened faith, it is, and remains, the King of Terrors. Never more than at the graveside did I pity my poor black brethren, wondering how they tried to calm their hearts and overcome their sorrow. There is something profoundly touching in their most absurd rites, because, after all, they are all imposed by a craving for life and purity. Will my readers allow me to conclude this subject by a personal reminiscence? The day I attended the burial of Sokis, when his relatives had finished filling in the grave, they asked me to lead them in worship. Bantu heathenism is so poor, it feels itself so week that it readily accepts the help of a higher religion. So I tried to turn the eyes of my hearers away from the underground hut, and to fix them on the eternal dwellings of the Father's house. Then Sokis's youngest brother took the nkanye twig and performed the heathen religious ceremony, calling his ancestors to come and bless them and entreating the deceased to leave them in peace. The contrast between these two prayers made at the same grave was indeed striking. And, whatever we may think, even if we had no religious convictions at all, should we not earnestly desire that, for these people, the bright comforting Christian hope may dispel the darkness of their thoughts and the sufferings involved in their rites?

846 A demonstration of joy takes place at the birth of any subsequent
831 child, but the kunga is only performed for the first-born. It does not seem that in the case of the first-born child, as in the case of bowumba (see p. 125) the gifts of kunga are subject to any taboo.

8) Loss of children.

766 A woman who loses an infant (wa ku felwa) is deeply contam-
783 inated with the defilement of death. She must bury it herself
834 without aid from her husband. Next day, she goes behind the
833 hut, kneels down and draws off her own milk on to the ground. She does this until the secretion has ceased. This is taboo ; her milk is polluted ; no drop of it must fall in the gardens. She must avoid crossing the fields and going to the storehouses to fetch food.
E364 Until she has been "put right again (busetela)," she eats with a spoon. To use a spoon is a bad omen for a woman, because it reminds her of death. That is the reason why men adopt this civilized custom more readily than women. During her mourning, no sexual relations are allowed. When menstruation begins again, she first keeps silent, and does not tell her husband. Only on the second or third occasion does she inform him of the fact. He can then purify her ; this is done in the same way as in the case of widows. (See p. 154.) Then he buys new clothing for her and she resumes her ordinary mode of life. Everybody seeing her with this new attire will know that "she has been repaired." Should any one else than the husband give her this clothing, the latter will be greatly offended and accuse her of having relations with a lover.

765 A man does not put on *malopa*, mourning clothing, for a child
586 who was not yet of age. The woman alone does so. However a husband is always grieved at the death of his child and a sad event like this often leads to dreadful results. He will begin to think that his wife is a witch and has eaten her own child by her magical powers. Such an accusation is almost sure to end in a divorce.

A woman who has *lost many children*, three or four, is considered

A woman who has lost many children, three or four, is considered as being in a special position, called *bowumba*, and there are many rules to be observed in order to deal with this "state of bereavement." Should a child be born after the death of many elder brothers, he must be carried in a *ntehe* made of a sheep's skin instead of an antelope or goat skin. (See p. 46.) To carry him in an ordinary ntehe is taboo. Should it be a boy, the mother will put girl's clothing on it, and vice-versa. The mother's breast will be smeared with a special medicine, because they are "breasts of the dead (mabele ya bafi)." The child, if it lives, will be weaned as early as possible and be taken to its grandmother. Two curious rites are also practised to protect it against bad luck. The first is the *kunga* ; the second, *rangela bowumba*, seems to belong rather to the Northern clans.

765 854 761 844 [862]

The *kunga* rite which we have already met many times (see p. 124) is also performed in the case of a mother who has given birth to a new child whilst in the state of bowumba. To neglect it is a taboo. The bereaved mother keeps silent before her visitors until they have deposited their gifts at her feet and have thus "opened her mouth." Old women having no means to buy a present take a bit of grass and fix it in her hair. Then she consents to speak. She gathers all the bracelets thus obtained and puts them on the ntehe, carrying them everywhere with her.

789 761 854 844

Another rite is observed in the Northern clans. The child whose elder brothers and sisters have died is taken by the mother to the village of her own parents. There it is buried in the ash-heap up to its neck. Then somebody runs to the village, takes a handful of grains of maize and throws them on the child. Afterwards it is dug up, washed, smeared with ochre and brought home. This rite is called *rangela bowumba*, viz. to *precede* bowumba, to cut it, to treat it : the bowumba will not now come as it has been "preceded". It will be deceived, it will no longer desire the baby, as the baby has been thrown away together with all the refuse of the village on to the ash-heap. It is no longer able to eat mealies, even if it is given grains of mealies ; it is dead! Let the bowumba take no notice of it! (This description of the "rangela bowumba" was given to me by an old Thonga from Spelonken. Mankhelu, my Nkuna informant, called this rite

789 761

586 mere incompatibility of temper. Heathen men are often hard
562 to their wives. They refuse to give them money to buy
578 clothing. "They are stones," said one of these men to me. "Though you scratch a stone with your nail, the nail will break and the stone will remain!" On the other hand, the women are by no means sweet, obedient creatures ; therefore quarrelling often takes place. When she thinks she is persecuted (shanisa), the wife *runs home*. This is her great weapon. The husband heaves a sigh of relief... But very soon he becomes aware of his misfortune. No food, no cooked meal in the evening! His companions share their own food with him for some days, but they will not consent to feed him long. He will have to go modestly, humbly to his parents-in-law and ask his wife to return. Then they enquire into the matter, and he perhaps receives a good scolding. It may be that the domestic life will improve, both fearing the renewal of the conflict. It may however be that the situation will grow worse and worse, and then it will lead to divorce, viz. the husband will claim his money and, when he gets it back, the marriage is dissolved (ku dlawa ka bukati).

An accusation of witchcraft may also cause divorce, especially after the death of a child ; so also can sterility, as we have seen, p. 190. Gross selfishness on the part of the husband may lead to it ; many tales tell the story of a man who in time of famine succeeded in killing an antelope, kept the meat for himself and did not give any to his wife and children. The wife noticed it and, when the famine came to an end, she invited all her relatives to a beer feast. Then she shewed them the bones of the antelope, telling them how badly her husband had treated her ; her parents took her home together with the children. Sometimes the conclusion of the tale is that the man even lost his lobolo money, as a punishment for his evil deed! (See *Grammaire Ronga*, page 202. *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 260.)

11) Widowhood.

783 When a man dies all his relatives are contaminated by the
765 defilement of death, as we have seen (Page 143). There are concentric circles around him, some people being more affected

783 765 562 than others. The wives form the first circle, especially the first wife. They have therefore to perform peculiar purifying ceremonies which throw great light on the profound feelings of the Thongas regarding life and nature. On the other hand they are the property of the husband's family and they are part of his belongings. How are they to be distributed amongst his heirs ? This is a very delicate matter. It is more or less regulated by the tribal law. Hence there are two series of rites to consider, in the customs relating to widows : 1) The rites of purification, 2) the laws of distribution.

783 765 Let us describe first the fate of the great wife amongst the Rongas (See for supplementary details : The fate of widows amongst the Ba-Ronga. S.A.A.A.S. 1909).

a) *The first day*. Manyibane is dead! — a sad event for his wife. She is called to inspect his grave. She assists silently at his funeral. But as soon as the younger brother of the deceased has finished praying, she bursts into tears and cries aloud! Her parents cry also : "Our child has fallen into misfortune! Now the cold has come for her! She will learn to know the cold water!" This is an allusion to the kind of life which the new widow will have to lead. Every morning she must go to the lake or the pool, with her companions, to have her whole body washed till the days of purification are completed.

783 765 575 The first of these purifying rites is performed just after the burial. The widow, surrounded by other women, goes to the pool and there all must wash their bodies. Most of them return home at once. But the widow remains there with *other widows* who have lost their husbands in former years. They form a *secret society* which assembles only to receive new members into its ranks. Nobody must see the strange rites performed by them. It is a *Ngoma* (the same word as for the circumcision school). However, the mysterious company takes possession of the great road (gondjwen), and every one must take care not to pass along it at that time, for great misfortune might overtake the imprudent one who should approach too near and catch a glimpse of the proceedings. A wise man, on seeing the suspicious group

783 of mourning women sitting on the main road, prudently stops and
765 makes a long detour to avoid the place... What is done at this
575 meeting ? One of the widows makes an incision with a knife or a
787 bit of glass in the skin of the new member of the society, in the inguinal region on the left side, "where the husband was resting." If the blood flows freely, it is a good sign. The women are satisfied ; they say there was a good understanding between husband and wife ; if the blood does not flow it is a bad omen. Then one of them lights a little fire with a handful of dry grass ; this grass has been torn from the roof of the deceased's hut. A little excrement from a cock (not a hen!) is then thrown into the fire, and the widow must expose both hands to the smoke. Afterwards she must extinguish the fire with her own water. Should she be unable to do this, it is a further proof that she has not been faithful to her husband and that she has killed him by her adulteries. These rites are very similar to the first circumcision rites, the incision performed recalling the ablation of the foreskin, and the exposure to the smoke, the jumping over the fire. These are great taboos. Evidently they are initiation rites, accompanying the passage from one condition to another. Why does the ceremony take place on the main road ? Because later on the contamination of death will attach itself to travellers passing that spot, and the mourners themselves will get rid of it in this way.

783 After that, the company returns home. The other widows
765 take every bit of clothing from their companion, and tie a reed or a
575 palm thread around her waist with some broad leaves attached
292 to it. With this scanty garment, they bring her home. She walks surrounded by them. Someone warns the men to leave the road as they are not allowed to see the procession. They hide themselves in their huts. The widow is led to her hut, the hut of the great wife which has now been uncrowned. She must accomplish *the last crossing of the hut*. Entering through the door, she shouts loudly : "My husband! My husband! You have left me alone! What am I to do ?" Then she goes out, not by the door but by the hole which has been made in the wall to carry the corpse to the grave. Behind the hut her friends are waiting for her and give her back her old clothing, which has been

783 washed in the pool and which she will wear again for two days (1).
765 b) *The following days of the Great Mourning.* Without delay a new hut, a small provisional hut, is built in front of the mortuary one. Here the great wife will stay during the whole of her widowhood; the space between this and the old hut is more or less taboo and most of the possessions of the deceased are placed there, under the roof near the door on the outside. (See illustration p. 159.)

The other widows do not leave their huts, but they participate in the other purifying acts, the vapour baths and the general sprinkling of the fifth day. As regards the vapour baths, however, the first wife is associated with the grave-diggers, viz. she must be exposed to the strongest medicinal smoke, while the inferior wives are cleansed with weaker drugs. They all put on the *malopa* and eat with spoons during the whole year of widowhood.

587 c) *Provisional decision regarding the fate of the widows.* A few
595 days after the Great Mourning, a fresh gathering takes place, not
128 in connection with the defilement of death, which is now provision-
768 ally cleansed, but *to settle provisionally the fate of the widows.* The
604 sisters of the deceased have to play a special part in this gathering. They will lead the discussion with the widows about their new husbands. It is indeed a happy custom to let women decide on the subject. Not that they have unrestricted power in the matter. The law has provided a certain rule for the distribution and this is seldom departed from. However, some liberty is allowed in its application, and modifications can better be made if proposed by female intermediaries. Should the husband possess a harem (tshengwe), that is at least five wives, they will most likely be given to the following heirs. The great wife, being "the pole of the

575 (1) *Widowers* also form a similar society and undergo the same rites; but just as it
783 was only the great wife who was subject to these laws, to the exclusion of the little wives, so it is only when he has lost his first wife that a man is initiated into the
765 widowers' society. After having buried her (he holds her head) he goes to the pool, washes himself, and another widower comes and makes the incision in him in the inguinal region. Then he throws aways his *shifado* (Annotatio 1.) and also carries out the same crossing of the hut in tears. These three acts constitute the actual widower's mourning: the vapour baths and *tahla khombo* are part of his purification as being the principal grave-digger.

1 [See category 116 --Analyst]

587 live in the village, the family council will certainly object strongly
595 to her wish, as her departure would mean that the village would
428 cease to exist. But in the case of the younger widows it is quite
768 possible that an exception to the ordinary law would be allowed if they insisted upon choosing another husband (1).

After all, this is but a preliminary consultation, and the men who are rejoicing at the idea of getting new wives will perhaps be badly deceived later on, as we shall see. However the man provisionally chosen as the future husband of a widow, will at once pay visits to her, "march to her" (ku mu fambela), according to the technical expression.

765 d) *The casting away of misfortune.* But before any new and
783 happy life can begin for the widows, they have still to go through a
833 very hard trial. They must perform the *lahla khombo*, the throwing away of the malediction of death, and this is much more difficult for them than for the grave-diggers or the other members of the village. The main point in this strange act of purification is this ; before a widow can become the wife of her new husband, she must have sexual intercourse with another man whom she deceives. Should she succeed in freeing herself from him so that the act keeps its ritual character, s. n. i. (see Annotatio 2)[1], this man will take on himself the malediction of death, and she will be purified. On the contrary, should the man accomplish the whole act, the widow has failed and will return home with shame and in despair! Here is a description of this sad expedition of the widows. It takes place a few days after the gathering just described. The men of the village send the widows away, telling them : "Go and scatter (hangalasa) the malediction through the country and get rid of it before some other misfortune happens to us."

(1) What would happen should the widow choose a husband outside her husband's family? To the mind of a heathen woman the idea would never occur. But suppose a Christian widow, having only married suitors, refuses to become their wife, her conscience forbidding her to contract a polygamic union. Her case would be very hard indeed, as I do not think her wish would be taken into consideration by heathen relatives. It would have to be brought before the White magistrate, who would probably try to help the widow. I think that, even if the woman consented to submit such family matters to the European court, she would have to give the *lobola* or her children back to her brothers-in-law, and that might be an impossibility for her. It would be interesting to know how Native Commissioners proceed in such cases.

1 [See p. 516 in these categories or in CK--Analyst]

765 783 833 With their conical baskets on their heads they all go, each accompanied by a friend who will act as witness. They pay a visit to some distant relative and try to flirt with the men of the village. Their aim is clearly understood ; morals are so dissolute that it is not difficult for them to attain their desire. (But the purifying act is useless unless interrupted abruptly before its completion). If the widow succeeds, she is full of joy, and comes back saying : "I have coped with the mourning, I have overcome it." Should she not succeed, she has then been "overcome by the mourning." This is a serious condition, which can only be dealt with by special medicines. The man who has unconsciously purified a widow and who becomes aware of it, will also have recourse to the *ñanga* to get rid of the pollution of death (1). The widows endeavour to come back all together ; they stand by the main entrance of the village and announce their success with the *mikulungwana* shouts, which mean at the same time joy and sorrow. Everyone meets them there, and they form a procession to the grave to tell the deceased what has happened : "You have left us in the open field ; we have had to go through a painful trial ; it would not have been so if you had not left us!" But, after all, this is a day of rejoicing, and the men, the heirs to the widows, are particularly pleased. The same day the widows put on a new undergarment and complete their purification by another steam bath.

At this time the mourning is said *to have ripened* (wupfile). The widow's hair has grown again. What remains is to *kill the mourning* (dlaya nkosi). This is done by the man who "marches to" or visits the widow. In the evening, he is allowed into her hut : they make a fire in it, put into the fire two pills of a purifying medicine, and expose their limbs to the smoke. Then they put it out with their own water, after which they can have sexual relations without harm. A certain time must, however, elapse before the adjudication of the inheritance takes place.

(1) He may also avoid the danger of being killed by the contamination of death in the following manner : Supposing that the woman who tries to seduce him is a widow, he tears off a little piece of her most intimate undergarment before the act. Later on he asks a *ñanga* to prepare a medicine into which this bit of clothing will be introduced. Then he covers himself with a blanket, burns the medicinal pill on a live charcoal and inhales the smoke. He is safe, and the woman also has been cleansed.

124 The description I have given of the *lahla khombo*, translating
128 exactly the narratives of Mbozà, Elias, and an old widower called
164 Magingi, refers to the rite as it was performed in the normal
783 fashion some twenty years ago amongst the Ba-Ronga. Now
765 customs are changing. There is, all around the town of Lourenço Marques, an agglomeration of Natives coming from many tribes. Immorality there has become terrible owing especially to alcoholic excesses, a free and enormous sale of adulterated wine taking place in this region. The widows are sure to find there a hundred men for each of them, when they wish to cast away their defilement. But in this promiscuity the poison of syphilis makes terrible ravages. According to our medical missionary, 90 % of the
783 Natives are contaminated by this disease. When the men up
765 country saw that their wives came back ritually purified but
178 physically contaminated, they began themselves to accomplish the
833 necessary act. This has become the general custom to such an extent that, when a widow goes to Majlangalen, (such is the name of that hell of drunkenness and immorality), it is now said of her : "She will refuse to stay with her legal heirs!" However the law of the *lahla khombo nhoben*, to cast away the malediction in the bush, remains inexorable in the three cases where the defilement is considered as being of the worst kind : if the
[845] husband died of phthisis or of leprosy, or if the woman has had twins.

Old widows who can find no lovers may be purified by means of drugs.

765 e) *The year of widowhood.* Though the widows have found
587 new husbands, they still remain in the old kraal. They must accomplish there "a full hoe," viz. a whole year of ploughing. In their new fields they leave the dry sticks of the mealies of the year before, in such a way that everybody passing by will know at once that this is the field of a widow. But what they harvest this year will belong to the new husband. They have now the right to *fambelana*, viz. to go to each other. The suitor brings clothing to the woman, and the woman pays him visits with jars of beer. They belong more or less to each other. But the marriage of the inherited woman is not absolutely settled. Her

768 taboo. Those who have received a wife go home rejoicing. When he has reached home, the fortunate husband kills a fowl or even a goat to make a fitting reception for his new wife. This is the end of the long period of widowhood, in which it is easy to discover the whole sequence of the passage rites.

783 Such is the old normal way of reinstating a widow in society.
765 But there are special cases where the rites are slightly different. If a widow is old and cannot expect to deceive a man, she simply buys medicines which are supposed to cleanse her.

The case of the wife of Sokis (see page 139, footnote) was more difficult. She had a baby, and sexual relations were consequently prohibited. Moreover the man who legally inherited her was in Johannesburg and could not provide for her purification. One of the grave-diggers took his place and "ran for her" (tjutjumela). This is a different expression for *fambela*. As far as I could understand, this man had ritual relations with his own wife in order to *lahla khombo*, to be purified himself. Then he tied the cotton string (boha nshale) round the waist of the widow. A sick widow will also be treated by *tjutjumela*. The grave-digger possesses the means of cleansing them, having gone through the mourning together with them.

These attenuated processes of purification seem the rule amongst the *Northern clans*. According to Viguet, the widows must also go to the bush (hula ni nhoba) to meet with a man who will free them of the defilement of death. The man who performs this act is called the *shikomho* of the widows. There are certain individuals who make a real business of this. Knowing drugs with which to cleanse themselves (ku tirulula), they claim a reward for their help... The widows remove their mourning attire (bracelets of strings on that occasion), and return home adorned with beads.
768 In the Djonga dialect the adjudication of the inheritance is called
783 *pandja ndjaka*. It is not accompanied by a sacrifice. There seem to be some differences in the ideas of the Rongas and of the Northern clans. For the former the defilement of death contaminates the hut to a greater extent. This must be destroyed, and the widow has to undergo the very hard casting away of misfortune (lahla khombo). For the latter the impurity rests more on the

764 prepared, all the limbs cut off, the portion of the gods set apart.
782 The elder brother of the deceased woman prays in these words :
768 "My sister, go in peace, be not angry ; because we love you, we
595 have come to mourn you to-day. Do not say we have not mourned you. Go to so and so (father, grandfather, etc.), call them here, give us good sleep and good health, etc." The batukulu appropriate the offering and the mourning ends in laughter, dancing and drinking. The neighbours come and take part in the rejoicings.

When they return home, the mourners spend all the mahloko money in buying wine. They sometimes become quite intoxicated. Afterwards both families begin to visit each other again.
764 This custom of the mahloko fine is so strong that converts
768 still adhere to it. But they usually send the money to the wife's family when informing them of the death, and no other ceremony is performed.

In the Northern clans the mahloko are also paid, but it seems that the family of the widower considers that it has the right to claim the repayment of the whole lobolo, when the deceased wife has left no child to compensate for the loss. In Nondwane, though we are still in Ronga territory, when the woman dies shortly after marriage the lobolo must be repaid. Further north
765 the procedure is as follows : the deceased woman is buried by her
782 husband according to the ordinary rules ; one year elapses and a special feast is celebrated, similar to the "beer of mourning" (page 164), in the village of the wife's parents, where both families gather together and provide the necessary victims. It commences with a sacrifice in which the father of the deceased wife squeezes the *psanyi* of the goat on to those present, all the time insulting the gods who have killed his child and made trouble between the two families. He ends with words addressed to the widower's relations : "I cleanse you from your misfortune." The widower's father does the same thing, insulting also his own gods, and every one rubs his body with the green liquid squeezed from the *psanyi*. Then prayer for new blessings is offered and the sacrifice is made, as
765 customary, and the actual discussion as to claims takes place. Each family takes possession of a hut, the widower's family assembling

765 as usual in the house of the deceased wife's mother, and the parley takes place through the go-between (tintjumi), as in the discussions which precede marriage. Let us call the husband's family A and that of the wife B. A sends two hoes to B as a notification : "Your child died with us last year." B answers "All right! Then pay the fine for her head (nhloko). Because you had only bought her legs. Her brain, her head, her name was still ours." A sends five hoes to B, to pay for the brains of the deceased. B takes two of the five and sends them back to A, saying : "One of them is to cleanse you from the misfortune, and we shave your head with the second." A accepts the two hoes and returns home. Should the wife have died childless, there will be a second act to the procedure: A has "opened the door of the claim" (a pfurile nyangwa wa nandju). He will come back shortly to lodge it with B.

587 Here he comes. Using his go-between (ntjumi) as a mouth piece,
768 he says to B : "Look at us! We gather our ashes with our own hands and we dig water in small shells of sala,— viz. we have no wife to do this feminine work for us!" It means : "Please give us another wife or repay the money to buy one." If B happens to have a girl of marriageable age, he will say : "Do not kill us ; we put a log of wood across the road" (hi hingakanya ntjandja). This means : "We have put something to prevent you from coming to us as enemies. Here is a new wife for you." A understands quite well and goes home satisfied. He comes back without delay and brings twenty or thirty hoes, which is a beginning of lobola payment. He says : "We thank you for the wife." The girl then follows him at once, if she is of marriageable age ; if not, she stays at home until she is grown up, and during all this time her new husband provides her with clothing. When, having gone to live with him, she gives birth to a child, B comes to A and says : "Nwombekazi a yi ambi nandju," viz. "A cow which has calved is not used to pay a debt," that is to say : she must be paid for herself. This technical expression means therefore : As our daughter has given you posterity, pay the full lobolo for her! A will certainly do it "hi bushaka," on account of the friendly relation existing between B and himself. But if B has no girl to give in compensation, if he has no money, what will happen ? A will

621 754 596 own huts to protect them against would-be-witches. In this way many villages are broken up by fear of witchcraft. Generally speaking the Thonga village cannot long remain of any considerable size ; it tends to fall to pieces.

But there are other causes which may destroy the village and the idyllic life of the small community. The death of the headman, and lightning striking the village, are the two main causes which may bring about this event.

765 596 621 787 *Death of the headman.* There is a mystic tie between this man and the social organism which is under him. Should he die, the village dies also... It is not abandoned at once. The whole year of mourning will elapse before the moving. But as soon as the widows and property have been distributed, the successor of the deceased will go and found his own village and the old one will remain a ruin (rumbi). Should any one else die, his hut will merely be thrown into the bush and the village will not be abandoned. But should these deaths increase, then the divinatory bones may order the place to be deserted, as it is defiled and dangerous.

821 756 787 621 If *lightning* strikes the hubo, it is a very bad omen. The medicine man who has the power to "treat the place struck by lightning" is called in. Should he be able to exhume from the ground the mysterious bird which causes lightning, or at least the coagulated urine which it has deposited, and which is called Heaven (See Part VI), the people are allowed to stay. But if he does not discover it deep down in the soil, the village must move, as the presence of the mysterious power of Heaven inside the circle of huts would bring disaster. This is a taboo.

621 787 596 Another cause of moving is the *exhaustion of the gardens.* When the fields are "tired" (karala) and do not produce sufficient food for the inhabitants, they leave the place and look for pastures new. In that case the bones will be consulted. Sometimes, even, the village may be transported elsewhere for the sole reason that the people are tired of the place and want to change. If the bones confirm their wishes, they will move.

621 596 *The founding of a new village* is the occasion of most interesting and characteristic rites, which afford us a new [illegible]

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

621 10) Having closed the village in this way, she *performs a sacrifice.*
595 She sips a mouthful of water from a tumbler, spitting out a
782 portion of it (phahla) towards the people ; then she washes her hands, and throws a little of the water towards them in order *to give them* the village. This act is accompanied by the following words : "Be not tied by the village! Bring forth children ; live and be happy and get everything. You gods, see! I have no bitterness in my heart. It is pure. I was angry because my husband abandoned me, he said I was not his wife ; he loved his younger wives. Now, this is finished in my heart. We shall have friendly relations together..." The prayer being concluded, the headman goes to the main entrance, pushes the thorny branch aside, and opens the village.

621 11) The last act is the *khangula*, the *inauguration ceremony*.
574 Beer is prepared, neighbours are invited and they all drink together, the neighbours coming *to see the new village* (ku bona muti).

As regards the old one, when the moving has been accomplished through the back door widened for the purpose, one of the inhabitants closes the main entrance with a branch. Hence comes the expression which is applied to a village all of whose inmates have died, and which has, on that account, disappeared : "Those people have all died and there was not even one left to close the gate."

II. *In the Ba-Ronga Clans.*

621 The sequence of rites for the removal of a village is very
787 much the same as in the Northern clans.

824 1) The headman examines some spots and consults the bones :
765 "Must I built at such and such a tree ?"

2) When the tree has been designated, he goes to it and places at its foot his furniture (nyundju) and his instrument of worship, his altar, (a pot, a jar, see Part VI). The altar may be placed at the main entrance later on, if the bones so order it. As already mentioned, there will be a mystic relation between him and that tree. He must never cut it down. If any of the branches should be

621 824 765 troublesome and he should wish to remove them, he must ask some one else to do it. On the day of his death, or rather when his hut is crushed down, a branch of that tree will be put on the place where the threshhold was, and another used to close the main entrance of the village, a new entrance being then made through the fence and used as the gate during the rest of the mourning period.

621 833 3) He has sexual relations on the new spot on the first night with his principal wife ; in this way he will *fuya muri*, viz. "possess this tree," and also *fuya muti*, "possess the village." The Ronga *fuya* corresponds here also to the *boha* of the Northern clans (Compare boha puri and fuya ñwana, page 57). If someone precedes him in sexual intercourse, he is guilty ; he has "preceded the village" (rangela muti). By this act the headman has definitely left the old village. The others can go back to it to fetch what remains ; for him it is taboo.

621 831 834 342 4) The same day, all the inhabitants come and move all the roofs, if it is possible to do this in one day. One hut is rapidly built to afford shelter to the inhabitants, in case of rain. The first roof to be transported is that of the hut of the principal wife. This is also done to the accompaniment of obscene songs. These songs are not allowed when only one hut is transported, which may happen when some one goes to live in another village.

It is definitely a custom which goes with the moving of a whole village.

5) The following day two huts are erected, one for the men, the other for the women, because they must not sleep together. "They are still in the bush ; it is buhlapfa ; the village is not yet firm." Those who break this law cause injury to the headman. The bones will soon reveal that "he has been preceded as regards the village ; (a rangeliwile muti)." All the huts are smeared twice ; the women begin to sleep in them, but not the men. The fence and the main entrance must first be prepared.

621 789 6) The *main entrance* (mharana). The men pull up the grass all the way from the back hut to the place where the main entrance must be, so as to make a road all through the village. All the dried plants weeded out during this operation are carefully

726 As regards the *order of the march*, the battalions of the young
701 men, stationed on either side of the entrance, go first ; they
643 form the advanced guard, the post of greatest danger. The scouts, tinhlori (Dj.) tinhloli (Ro.), go in front ; each company has its leader to whom these scouts bring reports. It is the duty of the young men to surround the position to be carried and to make the assault. The two sides of the circle then follow, and lastly the chest of the army, forming the rear guard. The chief thus brings up the rear, protected by the battalions of veterans. But generally the chief does not go to battle ; he remains at home.

726 During the campaign, *the whole clan is subjected to many taboos.*
784 Those who remain at home must *keep quiet* (rula). No noise
777 must be heard in the villages. The women must not close the
722 doors of the huts. It is taboo : their husbands might meet with "bitterness" (shibiti). They might lack strength to run away. Fire must be lit in the huts in the evening, in order that the warriors may "have light" where they are. It is taboo to omit this precaution. Work in the fields must be more or less suspended ; women may attend to it in the morning only, before the heat of the day, while the air is still fresh. "Then, if a warrior has stepped on a thorn, the thorn will be cool (titimeta) ; if he has knocked against a stump, the stump will be quiet and not hurt him. (Mboza.)" Old men who remain at home must keep watch, and if they see a messenger coming, they follow him to the chief.
765 Should he bring bad news, they do not inform the women, as it is
726 taboo to mourn over warriors killed in war before the return of the
834 army. A fine is imposed upon those who contravene this law.
777 It is taboo also to have sexual relations as long as the army is on the
784 war-path. This would cause thorns to hurt the warriors and they would be defeated. (Mankhelu.)

722 According to Mankhelu, the mukhumbi may be again formed after arriving in the proximity of the hostile army. The
643 battalions will be sent one after the other by the great ndjuna who
726 will watch the progress of the fight. If he sees his men giving way, he "pours" (tshelela) new companies to help those who are fighting until they rush the position (gwabula) and put the enemy to flight. Then the pursuit begins. The dust flies up

726 warriors, as also those of Ñwamba, had received orders from the
175 Whites, at the end of January 1895, to attack Zihlahla and Mahazule.
703 One of the young men of Matjolo, who was present during the operations, told me this story : "We were to have joined the men of Ñwamba at a village called Mukapan, but did not find them at the rendez-vous. As they had made common cause with Zihlahla at the beginning of the revolt, we had not much confidence in them. It looked as if they were in hiding and intended to attack us treacherously and kill us. At this time two panics occured. The first was at Hukwen, when a man dreamt that he was being killed, and cried out : "Yo! Uwe! There are people who are killing me!" It was pitch dark. Every one jumped to his feet. Some ran to hide in the forest, but others shouted : "The enemy are here!" Fighting began in the regiment of Geba, (composed of men of the same age as Sigaole, the chief), but no one was killed. A few individuals who kept their presence of mind restored order, but we came very near exterminating each other! The next night a Chopi of our troop had a fright, and cried out : "Why do you want to kill me, you men of Matjolo ? I will tell Sigaole's mother." He was promptly secured and forced to keep quiet for fear that he would rouse the Nondwane people, etc. A similar panic seized the troops of Mahazule, when they went to lay waste the country round Lourenço Marques (October 1894).

726 To avoid these panics, as far as possible, the Ba-Ronga arrange a
192 password before starting on an expedition. I was able to learn two of these countersigns, after the war, by questioning some young men who had taken part in certain military operations. On one occasion the pass-word was as follows : "Be ge pi ?" These are Zulu words signifying : "What are you looking at ?" The requisite answer being : "Be ge pezulu"—"We are looking at the sky." In the famous attack made by the Zihlahla warriors on the town of Lourenço Marques, on 14th October 1894, the word was : "U landu bane ?"—"With whom have you a quarrel ?"—and the reply : "Ngi landa Mlungu!"—"I have a quarrel with the white man!"

727 *Return from the battle.* When a yimpi has been defeated in
765 battle, but is not pursued by the enemy, it returns silently and disperses before reaching the capital, each warrior going back ashamed to his village. Mourning takes place in the villages of the deceased. But much lamenting is not allowed. It may be that the chief will prohibit any mourning if many have been

727 765 killed, "because the whole country would mourn ; — they have not been killed by the mat (likuku) at home, but by the assagai on the battle-field! They are men! If any one weeps he will have to pay £ 2." (Mboza.)

726 703 When the Maputju yimpis fought against Nondwane in 1876, in the battle which took place near Malangotiba, (3 km west of Rikatla), they were decimated and eventually repulsed. Their chief Musongi sent them back to fight again. They refused. Then he punished them in the following way : he condemned them to go and fetch water with pots, like women, but they had to go on their knees to the pool, saying : "It is the result of our cowardice" — (Ngi ndaba ya bugwala). Afterwards they had to extinguish a bush fire with their hands, and came home very much scorched and burnt.

When the yimpi is victorious, the return is marked by important 727 533 535 songs called *hubu* (cl. dji-ma). The regiments follow each other, each singing his own *hubu*, and they at once build the mukhumbi when they reach the village of the chief. They dance, dance their doughty deeds. Suddenly silence is required ; the counsellors narrate to the chief how the fighting has proceeded and tell him the names of those who have killed enemies, those who have struck the first blow and their *bahlomuri*, viz., those who transfixed the leg and the arm. After which the heroes "gila" to their heart's content, together with the bahlomuri. They are proud! They are applauded! They are the great men of the day, the *tinguaza*, the saviours of the chief!

This leads me to consider the very curious customs connected with the slayers and the slain on the battle-field.

I. THE FATE OF THE SLAIN AND THE TREATMENT OF THE SLAYERS.

1. *The fate of the slain.*

534 727 When a man has slain an enemy, he has covered himself with the most enviable glory : he has the right to perform the war-dance before the chief. He takes away all the garments from

Latin Notes for Medical Men and Ethnographers

291 "Annotatio prima (P. 40). --'Shifado' quo quisque Thonga
845 extremum penem vestit, spheroides excavataque res est;
848 quod tegimentum ex iis, quae ad pudorem et munditiem perti-
881 nent, postulatur. Si quis schifado suum amisit, ei dedecoriest."

Note 1 (page 40). Shifado, with which every Thonga covers the end of his penis, is a spherical and hollowed-out object; this covering is demanded from those who are concerned with decency and cleanliness. If anyone has lost his schifado [sic] he is disgraced.

"Olim apud Thonga, qui a populo Zulo illum morem acceperunt, viri, quod linguâ 'mbayi' id est fistulam quandam ex foliis textis palmae quae 'milala' dicitur, ferre solebant.

[At one time among the Thonga, who took over this custom from the Zulu people, the men used to wear what in their language is called mbayi, that is, some kind of tube made of palm leaves woven together which is called milala.]

"Ultima 'mbayi' anno 1895 vel 1896 post Christum natum visa sunt. Quod shifado ex parvae cucurbitae cortice aut duro et excavato accurateque polito ligno factum, summo veretro affixum, minime incommode ferre videntur."

[The last mbayi were seen in the year 1895 or 1896. Because the shifado is made of the rind of a small gourd or of hard, hollowed-out and carefully polished wood, and attached at the top of the private parts, it seems that it can be worn with the minimum of discomfort.]

833 "Annotatio secunda (P. 56). S. n. i, sc. semine non im-
851 misso. Ad hoc, marito sperma foras spargendum est (a nga
842 mu weleri): hic est coitus rite factus et quasi lustralis. Inde,
765 uxor in manus utriusque sordes (thyaka ra bona) sumit, qui-
783 bus umbilicum illinit."

[Note 2 (page 56). S. n. i., that is, the semen has not been injected. Moreover the husband must eject his sperms outside of the body (a nga mu weleri): this is the coitus properly executed and, as it were, lustral. Then the wife takes in her hands the filth of both (thyaka ra bona) and smears the navel with it.]

"Annotatio tertia (P. 57). Corpus infimum pueri ex adverso et a tergo peni pater tangit.

[Note 3 (page 57). The father touches with his penis the lowest part of the boy's body from the front and from behind.]

831 "Annotatio quarta (P. 88). Hae sunt formulae:
881 Shaea kholoiwane ma ri tiba le'ri onhaka milebe?
Novistisne avem quae labra minora laedit?

832 Sometimes the girls measure their labia with small sticks
836 and boast of their length to their companions and even to their
304 bridegrooms. The girls follow these perverse practices for
881 no other reason than for the sake of their future husband.
171 Among the Ba-Pedi the husband may, if he thinks that his bride has not sufficiently stretched her labia, send her home and demand his bulls back. The girls keep a pot full of food ready and cover it with a lid. In the evening the boys come to the girls and give them a small gift in order to be admitted. In the house they sit down on the floor and watch the girls eating from a pot with their fingers. The girls whose milebe are four digits long eat using four fingers: they are bakulu, that is, adult, and they enjoy their lovers. Or they use only three fingers and sometimes two. The young girls eat with the palms of their hands.]

765 "Annotatio sexta (P. 154). Seu quis per ætatem iam pro-
783 vectam imbecillior factus erit, sive qualibet de causa tam
833 impotens ut sperma emittere non possit (a nga kumi mati), ceteri viri quid fiat sciscitabuntur. Quod si utique parum procedit, tota inhibetur cærimonia. Qui vero se invicem eodem ritu miscere debebant, iis ritum conficere non fas est. Ille jejunio, per quinque dies, prout res postulat, artissime utetur, cui medicinæ ad rem accommodatæ exquirentur.

[Note 6 (page 154). If someone should have become feeble because of advanced age, or if for some reason he should be so impotent that he cannot emit sperms (a nga kumi mati), other men ask what should be done. For if it proceeds quite insufficiently, the whole ceremony is held up. And those who should have had intercourse in turn in the same ritual fashion are not permitted to complete the rite. He [the impotent man] has to fast very strictly for five days as the situation requires and the remedies appropriate to the situation will be sought.]

843 "Annotatio septima (P. 154). Nocens maritus uxorque sui
834 purgandi causâ alium ritum peragent. Uxor mariti suaque
841 pudenda veste intima et inquinatissima tergebit, quam postea comburet.

Ambo, ad ignem accedentes, caput manusque calefacient. Inde cinerem collectum mulier adipe miscet, quo mariti artus illinit, digitis bracchiis cruribusque tractis, quod 'lula' dicitur. Postea, noctibus duabus sequentibus, coibunt. Si maritus, non cum uxore sua, sed cum puella quadam ex alio vico, stupri consuetudinem junxerit, huic fossorium donabitur, ut ritum 'lula' perfectum veniat.

[Note 7 (page 154). If the husband and the wife are guilty of an offense, they perform another rite for the sake of purging themselves. The wife will cover her husband's and

843 her own pudenda with a much befouled intimate garment which
834 she afterwards burns.
841 Going to the fire they both warm their head and their hands. Then the woman mixes the ashes she has collected with fat and smears it over her husband's limbs, rubbing along his fingers, his arms, and his legs, which is called lula. Afterwards, in the two nights following, they will have intercourse. If the husband has had sexual intercourse not with his wife but with some girl from another village from lustful desire he will be given a fossorium so that the rite lula will come to its completion.]

765 "Annotatio octava (P. 155). Si mulieris parentes procul
783 habitant, maritus eius comes itineris erit, quacum superiore
833 nocte coibit, ad aquæ lustrali vim novam dandam."
505 [Note 8 (page 155). If the woman's parents live far away, her husband will be her companion on the way and he will have sexual intercourse with her the night before in order to give the lustral water new power.]

765 "Annotatio nona (P. 160). Faciebat dum 'Khunye khunye';
535 quibus verbis significatur coitus (khunyeta)."
831 [Note 9 (page 160). She was saying Khunye, khunye during
834 this time; these words signify coitus (khunyeta).

"Annotatio decima (P. 160). Carminum, morum temporis marginalis natura eo obscenior est quo nobilior defunctus fuit. Viguetus narrat: [518] 'Duce vel uno ex principibus mortuo, luctuque consueto præterito, luctum privatum, ad quem boves immolentur, celebrari. Carnem ad baculos humi fixos alligari; homines inde mulierem vocare, eamque posteriorem vestem exuere juberi, neque ullam vestem nisi anteriorem habere quam, si velit, exuere ei liceat. Eam, postea, divaricaturam esse ad unam ex carnis particulis dentibus apprehendendam ita prominentem ut omnes viri eius pudenda videant, quod plerumque 'taboo' (id est nefas) sit.' "

[Note 10 (page 160). The nature of the songs, a custom of the marginal period, is the more obscene the greater the nobility of the deceased person was. Viguet relates: [518] "When the leader or one of the chiefs is dead and the usual mourning has passed, they stage a private mourning at which bulls are sacrificed. They tie the flesh to poles fixed in the ground; then the men call a woman and order her to take off the clothes on her back and they do not allow her to have any clothes on except the one in front which, if she wants to, she may also take off. Then she must seize one of the bits of meat with her teeth, bending forward in such a

765
535 way that all the men can see her pudenda which is
831 much tabooed (that is, sinful).''
834 "Annotatio undecima (P. 161). Hic, mulier paulo dilutiore
765 colore magnaque statura addit: 'Hi kundjana. id est:
792 coeamus!' "

[Note 11 (page 161). Here a woman with a slightly lighter color and of large stature, adds: Hi kundjana, that is, "let us have intercourse!"]

841 "Annotatio duodecima (P. 187). Hæc sunt ipsissima verba, quibus Makhelu mulieris menstruansis taboo (id est nefas) describit. Mulier menstruans est res, quæ imprimis 'yila' est. Per sex dies 'yila,' id est, nefas est. Septimo die transit flumen ad se lavandam. Octavo ei nondum licet cum marito suo coire; forte enim sanguis pudendis ad hæret, eà insciente. Magis 'refrigescit.' (Verbo phula menstruans mulier comparatur cum aula a foco remota).

Si, ante id tempus, maritus cum uxore coeat, ægrotus fiat, veretrum retro ita recedat ut vir urinam reddere non possit et, brevi tempore, moriatur. Talem vitæ exitum multi habuerunt. Radicibus arboris cui nomen est mayilana vel mulieris menstruantis vestis particulà, a medico ad levem pulverem redactà, quæ ægro bibenda est, morbus sanari potest. Aegrotus multum sanguinis reddet, et veretro exeunte, salvus est."

[Note 12 (page 187). These are the very words with which Makhelu [sic] describes the taboo (that is, the sin) of the menstruating woman. A menstruating woman is something which is, first of all, yila. For six days she is yila, that is to say, taboo. On the seventh day, the flow that cleanses her passes over. On the eighth day she is not yet allowed to have intercourse with her husband; for perhaps some blood is still sticking to her pudenda without her knowledge. She "cools down" even more so. (By the word phula the menstruating woman is compared to the pot removed from the stove.)

841 If the husband should have sexual intercourse with his wife
834 before this time, he will be taken sick, his private parts will
756 decay to such an extent that the man would no longer be able to pass urine and would die within a brief period of time. Many have had such an end to their life. The sick man can be cured by a liquid containing the roots of the tree that is called mayilana or by a particle of the menstruating woman's dress, reduced to a light powder by the medicine man. The sick man loses a lot of blood; after his penis is able to pass water again, the man is well again.

765 "Annotatio tertia decima (P. 213). Cærimoniis purification-
783 is, ubi res genitales primas obtinent partes, ita explicatis,
833 quaeramus quid significent ritus illi.
587 Mors est res quæ imprimis homines contaminat. Omnia polluit quae tangit, non homines tantum ipsos sed etiam quæ mortui fuerunt.

Apud homines, propinqui mors vitæ fontes imprimis afficit, id est membrorum succos qui vitam creant. Itaque et mulieris succi vaginales et viri succi spermatici tollendi sunt: in coitu autem, sub legibus certis sunt tollendi.

Cum vidua lustratur, aut a peregrino aut a novo marito purificatur.

1) Ut recta viduæ purificatio fiat, abrumpendus est coitus, et vir, antequam semen emittat, repellendus; vir erit tum contaminatus at mulier purgata. Vir si in coitu feminam eludentem animadverterit, eam viduam esse et ipsum occidere velle intelleget, tum comites vocat qui, mulierem apprehendentes, dum vir in sinum ejus semen emiterit, vi continebunt; mulier tum polluta manebit; quod querebat, non habebit. Vir contra erit sine damno: contaminatus non erit. [519]

2) Cum purificatio a novo efficitur marito, tum ambo in casam se includunt. Res agitur permagna: tabacum ne hauriant! Medicamenta potant singularia. Tum toties cœunt deinceps quoties vir ferre valet, decies et sæpius si potest. Sed toties vir semen extrinsecus emittit: 'bayisanyana ba fanela ku huma, i.e. amovendi sunt pueri (spermatozoa),' ut dicit unus ex eis qui me de his rebus certiorem fecerunt. Nunc sunt fontes vitæ apud virum purgati, quod fieri necesse erat, cum esset et ipse contaminatione impurus. Mulier quoque pura est, haud dubie medicamentorum beneficio quæ, antequam coirent, potaverunt ambo.

Quæ interpretatio ritum recte explicat cum ab impuris hominibus perpetratur. Sed cum a puris parentibus perpetratur, ut de 'boha puri' agitur (p. 56), tum res alio modo est explananda. Pater et mater cingulum infantis e lino xylino factum genitalibus succis inlinunt, ut infans eorum vitalibus succis corroboretur et in vitam gentis ita recipiatur.

These physiological conceptions, though they may be absolutely false from the scientific point of view, certainly proceed from deep intuitions regarding the mystery of life. I insist on the fact that they are not derived from religious ideas. It is a mistake to attempt to explain the whole life of the Banjus by their religion alone, as many writers are inclined to do. These sexual practices are not more religious than those prophylactic measures which we ourselves employ to preserve ourselves from tuberculosis or small pox. They

765 are dictated by a special notion of contagion which is admittedly
723 false, scientifically speaking."
833 [Note 13 (page 213). After we have thus explained the cere-
587 monies of purification in which genital matters play the primary role, we shall inquire into the significance of these rites.

Death is something that contaminates men above all. It pollutes everything that it touches, not men themselves only, but also the things that belonged to a dead person.

Among men, the death of a relative affects first of all the sources of life, that is to say, the juices of the limbs that create life. Therefore both the vaginal juices of a woman and the man's spermatic fluid must be removed: in coitus, however, they must be removed according to certain rules:

When a widow purifies herself, she is purified by a stranger or by a new husband.

1) In order that the purification of the widow proceeds correctly, the intercourse must be broken off and the man must be pushed back before he ejaculates his semen; then the man will be contaminated and the woman will be purged. If the man notices that the woman is trying to evade him during coitus he realizes that she is a widow and that she wants him to perish. Immediately he calls his companions who, seizing the woman, will hold her by force while the man ejects his semen into her vagina; in that case the woman will remain polluted and what she wanted she will not have. The man, on the other hand, will be without blame: he will not be contaminated. [519]

2) When the purification is effected by the new husband, then both seclude themselves in the house. One matter is urged particularly strongly: that they do not smoke any tobacco! They drink curious medicines. Then they have intercourse as many times in a row as the man can last, ten times and more if he is able. But as many times as they have intercourse the man ejaculates his semen externally: bayisanyana ba fanela ku huma, that is, "the children (spermatozoa) must be removed," as one of those who informed me about these things said. Now the sources of life of the man are purged, something which had to be done while he was impure with contamination. The woman is also pure, doubtless on account of the medicines which they drank together before they had sexual intercourse.

This interpretation explains the rite correctly, provided it is carried out by impure men. But when it is executed by pure parents, as when it is concerned with the boha puri (page 56), then the matter must be explained in a different

765 fashion. The father and mother smear the infant's girdle
783 made of cotton flax with their genital juices so that the infant
833 becomes invigorated by their vital juices and thus may be
587 received into the life of the tribe.

These physiological conceptions, though they may be absolutely false from the scientific point of view, certainly proceed from deep intuitions regarding the mystery of life. I insist on the fact that they are not derived from religious ideas. It is a mistake to attempt to explain the whole life of the Bantus by their religion alone, as many writers are inclined to do. These sexual practices are not more religious than those prophylactic measures which we ourselves employ to preserve ourselves from tuberculosis or small pox. They are dictated by a special notion of contagion which is admittedly false, scientifically speaking.]

595 "Annotatio quarta decima (P. 285). Doctori G. Liengmei,
833 nostro medico, cum sæpe curaret viros qui medicinam
842 petebant qua infantes procrearent, fassi sunt se singulis noctibus cum tribus vel quatuor uxoribus coire. (A monogamis quibusdam audivimus uxorem adeo fatigari ut noctu exiret laboratum ut a marito evaderet.) Cum medicus eos hortaretur ut quinque dies concubitu omnino abstinerent, nunquam id concedere potuerunt. Volebant enim facultatem generandi recuperare libidine non omissa. Dicuntur etiam cum vires cupiditatibus nondum pares esse videantur, remedia quædam adhibere sive ut venerem excitent sive ut uxores prægnantes fiant. Duplex fit medicatio. Primum secti testiculi hirci—(quod animal fatigari negatur, mbuti a yi karali)—cum plurimis herbis mixti coquuntur et a viro eduntur. Deinde alias herbas collectas in cerevisiam injicit. Tantum aiunt esse effectum ut viro qui non amplius duas uxores habeat, non sit ea re [520] utendum, ne, illis non sufficientibus, cum aliorum uxoribus stuprum committat, quod ei sit offensioni.

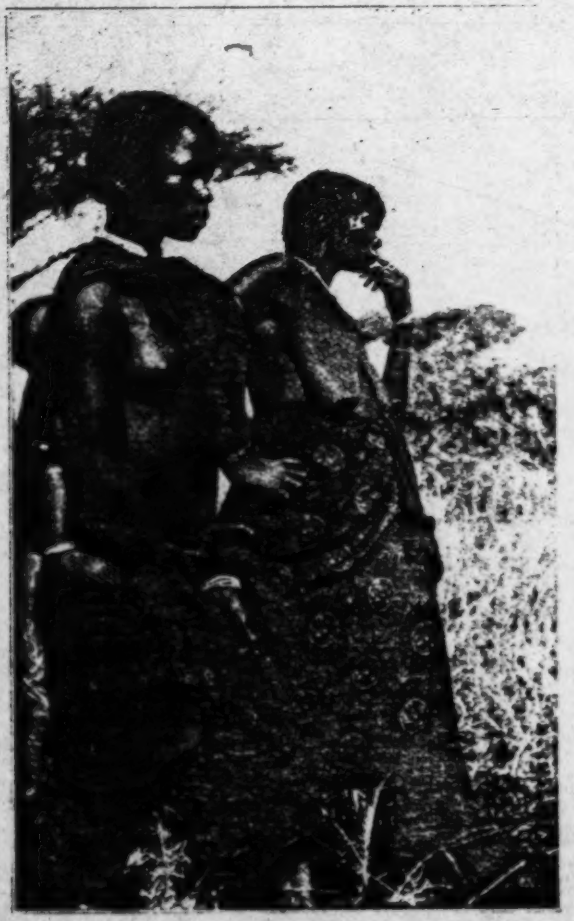
Viri casti, ut in loco Mpfumo videre licet, in sua casa dormiunt et interdum uxorem quam cupiunt ad se vocant. Plerique tamen, lege sibi imposita, ne discordia inter uxores erumpat, mensem unum in casa singularum uxorum vicissim agunt.

Qui plures habent uxores aliis etiam medicaments utuntur ad libidinem excitandam. Quorum unum putant ad effectum maxime valere: Medicus, cum se ipse curavit, in locum montium secedit, quo cynocephali feminæ urinam menstruali sanguine mixtam emittere solent. Quod manet in saxis et fœdissimam diffundit odorem, medicus excipiens coquit, et ex eo magnas conficit pillas quas emptoribus vendit. Hi eas-

301 out that this custom probably had a social significance in former times, though at present it is practised as an adornment.

302 As regards *hair* (nsisi, mu-mi), women often cut it, men less

142



Maputju women with "tingoya." *Photo P. Aubert.*

302 frequently. A man only cuts his hair when his wife dies, as a
[765] sign of mourning : it is a taboo (I. p. 146). In former times they never shaved their beards. People made fun of those who did so, saying : "Are you an Angolese?" (The Angolese, who are numerous in the neighbourhood of Lourenço-Marques,

439 monopolise the retail trade throughout the country, and the
563 Natives are quite unable to meet this competition; they have consequently almost entirely given up all their earlier attempts at business transactions! (1)

167 A second reason why the trade of former days has almost
439 entirely disappeared is to be found in the *great economic changes* resulting from the fact that Lourenço Marques has become an important seaport, in close relation with the miners of Johannesburg who receive their supplies via Delagoa Bay. Thousands of Natives are employed in discharging the large steamers which arrive by hundreds in the roadstead. At this work a Native can earn fifteen shillings a week or more; in a short time he has made ample provision for the wants of his family and no longer finds it necessary to go to Bilene, to Zululand or Swaziland to make a living. The women too can make money by selling tomatoes and sweet potatoes to an ever increasing White population. All this is much easier

439 (1) On one occasion, in 1892, I made a list of various articles displayed for sale in and around a Banyan shop, in the district of Mahazule (to the North of Nondwane).
292 This is what Mr. Nala, a Hindu from Goa established for many years amongst the Rongas, offered to the Natives living in the neighbourhood of his primitive store.
765 *Stuffs.* These are sold by measurement taken on the individual; say, by the
584 *shikumba*, length of one arm, or by the *nkumba* or *bemba* (two arms), or by the *peça*, the entire piece, the equivalent of two bemba. The materials most in demand are called; *tingidao* (white), *mashita* (black with white stripes), *sh landana* (all red), *shinwakana* (red and black), *mempana* (a special red stuff worn as mourning) and *malopa* (a navy blue material still more frenquently worn as mourning). Besides these are *handkerchiefs* (minturu) of various colours, principally red, a large proportion coming from the manufacturers of East Switzerland; white *blankets (gampongo*, meaning snow), for three or four shillings; coloured blankets, thicker, varying from five to seven shillings; towels, called *thawula* (an adaptation of the English word) and even some articles of ready-made clothing such as *djansi* (overcoats) at fifteen shillings! Amongst the stuffs I would more particularly note the *gangisa ntombi*, that is "for use when courting the girls", dark blue with a pattern of white flowers.
439 *Beads.* There are at least a dozen kinds to be found at Nala's; djiridja (black) mbanda (white), shingazana, shimuzana, nkankana, habo, matshimbarole, bafa, tshambo.
Sundries. Rings, fish-hooks, buttons (masowa), thread, needles, snuff boxes to be worn in the ears (tinhlanga), knives, spoons, balls of string, padlocks (makandjate) with key attached; little chains, to be hung from the belt, which tinkle when walking; bracelets (busenga, ten for a shilling); wooden spoons, combs, coils of fine iron wire; skins; a large trap for catching hyenas or other wild animals; small brass petroleum lamps; sardines at sixpence a tin, English biscuits, and last but not least, a cask of German brandy diluted (tempora) with 50% of water! This would now be replaced by three casks of Vinho colonial, one of white wine, one of red wine and one of I do not know what colour!

The stump is perhaps some ill-disposed person whose opposition the energetic maid is determined to overcome! 533 832

As a counterpart, here is the *complaint of a jilted lover*, who gives vent to his annoyance with the girl and her family : 539

> Refuse me if you will, girl!
> The grains of maize you eat in your village are human eyes!
> The tumblers from which you drink are human skulls!
> The manioc roots you eat are human tibia!
> The sweet potatoes are human fingers!
> Refuse me, if you will, girl!

The vexation of a jilted lover is of short duration. He has the money, he is sure to find a girl! But it would be erroneous to think Native lovers or husbands are not capable of deep and lasting affection. I know of a case, near Shiluvane, in which a Nkuna committed suicide because his wife had deceived him, and had relations with another man. 831

See, I. p. 286, the song in which the *despised wife* gives vent to her anger : her husband has plucked her little pumpkin and given it to the wife he preferred. No doubt the *bukwele*, the special feeling of jealousy existing between co-wives, has inspired more than one song which could find no equivalent in our own literature! 533

Mourning songs are numerous ; they are sung just after the burial. They are touching ; note the simple cry : 533 765 539

> Mamane! You have left us! whither have you gone?

The tune (No. 14) is striking : a very high and prolonged note, followed by double crochets sounded very rapidly and ending in another long note with a short sharp conclusion, like a cry of anguish.

One of those present rises and sings, as if he were playing the part of the bereaved :

> A la adji ya'ange-ke lepsi?
> Have they not hated me, treating me in this way?

All the throng of the mourners answer :

> Ba ku yalile, wena, wa ka manyana!
> They have hated you, son of so and so!

533 He answers :

539 Ba tekile nkhao !
765 They have taken my intimate friend !

This is no doubt an allusion to the wizards, who are supposed to cause most of the deaths. They are cursed in another very curious song, half Zulu, noted down by Mrs Audéoud in Maputju. (Tune 16.)

Hamban, Muthakati ! Bulela bantu ! — U teka b'sikwin !
Go away, wizard ! Killer of men ! — You take them during the night !

Or the mourning song may be a complaint, in which the family bewails its bereavement, like the old Nkuna song. (Tune 15) :

Hi bana ba Nhumba ya ntima ! Hi bana ba Malala ni ngobe.
We are the sons of the black house (the house of misfortune and defilement)

The following is strangely stoic :

A li beni mombo ! A li beni mombo !
Ku tshubuka, ku baba ka psone !
Let it beat the face ! Let it beat the face !
To run away, what a bitter thing !

Death is like a foe. Look at it face to face! Do not lose your courage in this last fight.

I quote in Part VI another mourning song, a very curious one, where an allusion is made to Heaven, the mysterious power which kills and gives life, which we have already heard mentioned in the song of the widows (I, p. 209), when they lament their bereavement.

533 This *stoic* song is also a *war* song ; it is customary to sing the
539 war songs at the death of any important personage. The following belongs to the same category, and is used on both occasions :

Ketle-ketle, nhubane ! Fumo dji wile ! A dlawa hi nomo, Tatana !
Hear this noise of weapons ! The assagai has fallen ! He has been killed on account of his words, father !

The chief has been killed in a fight which had been caused by his imprudent words : he wished to free himself from his

825 was working one day together with some little Pedi boys, I heard him talking volubly. Evidently he did not expect any answer from his helpers, who knew Thonga but imperfectly :

— "What are you saying?" I asked him. — "Oh! I am speaking to the cock." — "What do you mean?" — "I am asking it if it knows what is going on in our country, at Gungunyana. It answers that it does. This cock is a clever cock. It is a man. When cocks do not know what one asks them, they say *hwi* (descriptive adverb meaning to keep quiet)." — "Are there any other beasts to which one can talk?" — "Certainly, those which belong [765] to the village." — "Dogs?" — "No! Pigeons! When someone dies in the village, the headman must go and gather together all the pigeons, giving them some water or some food, and tell them about the death. Then they begin to coo ; they are satisfied to have been informed, treated like people of the home. If this precaution is omitted, the pigeons will leave the village in the afternoon and never return (1). This happened to a Ngoni of Bilen."

Enchanted animals can also speak, for instance a hyena which has been sent by a wizard. In Rikatla there was a man named Gebuza whose face was entirely disfigured, his nose having been torn off by a hyena ; his story was told as follows. Once a hyena entered the village in the early morning when every one was still asleep. It saluted the people saying :

— "Good morning, you people." — "Good morning" answered the people in the hut. — "Give me fire" demanded the hyena. — "Open the door and take an ember" they said. — "No, open it yourselves!" Gebuza opened the door and the hyena seized his nose in its teeth, and bit it off. This is one of the countless wizard stories. With the exception of these instances I do not think the Natives, as a rule, believe that animals have a language, or that men can speak with them. They do not, however, feel

(1) A curious resemblance may be noted here. Amongst French Swiss peasants and in parts of England and of Germany, when the master of the farm dies the bees must be officially informed of the fact, and some one goes to the bee hives and tells them what has happened; misfortune would otherwise befall them.

Regular acts of worship are performed also at the
burial (I. p. 142), at the *crushing of the hut* (I. p. 158-163), on the 782
days of *mahloko* (I. p. 215), and at the *adjudication of the inheritance* 765
(I. p. 208). 262

I have already mentioned the stringent taboo in regard to the victims killed in these sacrifices. The portions distributed amongst the different relations must not be eaten either in the village of the deceased, or in those of the various visitors. This meat must be roasted on the road, and eaten on the spot, and it is likewise taboo to season it in any way. The inhabitants of the deceased's village can eat the meat boiled, but it is prohibited to add ground-nuts to the broth.

These are the great family sacrifices, in which the uterine 782
nephews play their curious part, and on the occasion of which family matters are brought up and settled. They play a most important part in the life of the family, and I have therefore described them at length, when treating of the social life of the tribe, as religion and social life are here intimately united. There is therefore no need for me to add much more regarding them here. With their clearly established and typical ritual they form the most definite and settled element of the religious life of the tribe.

Rangane asserts that another offering is regularly performed in the Maluleke district. On the first occasion of the *cooking of the new mealies*, each headman prepares a little of the flour, takes a spoonful of it, and throws it away, praying at the same time to the Ba-Nyai spirits, i. e., the gods of the Ba-Nyai, who have been conquered by the Malulekes. He calls this "magandjelo ya ku ñwantseka," i. e., "sacrifice tasted and thrown away." This is evidently to propitiate the gods, who were the first owners of the country and who might harm or destroy the invaders. Compare p. 377 the respect shown by Mahazule to the Libombo sacred wood, and also the curious request of the Samaritans, II Kings. XVII.

Special Family Sacrifices. By these, I mean particularly those 782
offered *in cases of disease*. The bones having revealed that the 755
disease is caused by the gods (and not by wizards, nor by Heaven, nor by contamination, which are three other possibilities), and also that it comes from such and such a god, a god of bitterness, or a god

Special precautions are taken in respect to twins when they pay a mourning visit. One of the grave-diggers meets them at the entrance of the village and says: "Do not fear, Children of Heaven." He then puts some ashes on their heads and on their fontanelles. This is done because twins are feeble (ma ni bushapu) and the defilement might affect them more than other children. They must therefore be protected by smearing the middle of the head, and the "extremity of the tree of life," viz., the fontanelle, with a preventive. The mother also undergoes a similar treatment. She must prostrate herself near the hut of the deceased, at the place where the wall has been pierced to make an exit for the corpse. Then the grave-digger brings some live embers in a broken pot, pours a little water on to them, and dips his fingers into the water; he then presses both his hands against the woman's belly and brings them round her waist, pressing them all the while against the skin, until they meet on the spine; thus she is "cured inside" (dahiwa ndjen). This will prevent her from suffering from internal troubles, to which she, having given birth to Tilo, Heaven, is particularly liable. (Comp. I. p. 151) (1).

From this brief description of the customs connected with twins in most of the Thonga clans, it may be seen that their explanation is twofold: 1) The birth of twins is a death, consequently a defilement, indeed the worst of all defilements. Hence the *purificatory rites* which bear the character of *passage rites*: the mother is secluded and passes through a period of isolation, after which she is again admitted to society after a painful "casting away of her misfortune." 2) But the cause of the defilement is not an ordinary death, but Heaven. *She is Heaven*; she is said to have

(1) Another category of persons bearing a special relation to Heaven are the *albinos*. Cases of albinism are not frequent amongst South African Natives, yet they are sometimes met with. They are called in Thonga *Khalandlati*, a word which means literally *charcoal-lightning*. It is believed that they have been burnt (hisa) by lightning in their mother's womb before their birth. "Ba tlalile, a ba wupfanga, ba bengiwi hi tilo," viz. "they are uncomplete beings, they are not ripe, they have been hated by Heaven"; these are the terms in which they are described. They are not however regarded as taboo (yila), they merely inspire disgust (nyenya) (p. 83). As regards women suffering from this kind of disgrace, other women do not smear themselves with the same ochre as they, lest they should give birth to albinos; they do not drink from the same cup. Men do not marry them, and in this respect they are classed with leper women and witches, who are also looked on as repugnant.